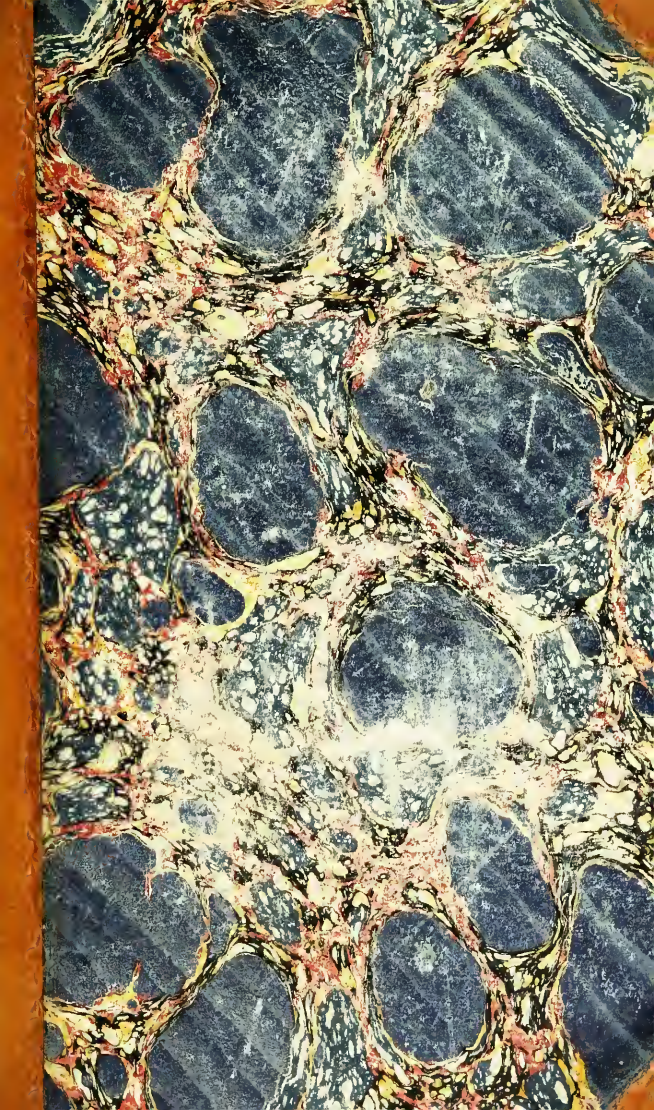




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THOUGHTS OF THE TIMES;

OR

MEN AND THINGS.

BY

T. B. BROWNE, ESQ.

Per lo gran Mar del essere. — DANTE.

Je ne vois le tout de rien. — MONTAIGNE

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THOUGHTS OF THE TIMES;

OR,

MEN AND THINGS.

OF HISTORY.

The school of example is the world: and the masters of this school are history and experience.—*Bolingbroke.*

HISTORY has been cultivated in our time with more than ordinary diligence and success. Historians have become more accurate in their facts, sounder in their principles, and certainly not less picturesque in their narrative. Here, however, as elsewhere, the mechanical spirit of the age has obtruded itself; forgetting that many parts, without union, will not make one whole, we must have our division of labour, and forthwith issue from divers intellectual mills histories picturesque which do not amuse, and histories philosophical which do not instruct. A bundle of laborious essays and exaggerated romances tied up together, is a poor substitute for a living, comprehensive history.

Yet this mischievous and disagreeable separation of the picturesque and the philosophical, in the

present instance, is not altogether without excuse. The difficulties with which the historian has to contend are many and various. One, not the least important, is inherent in the very nature of language, for the same words do not convey the same ideas to the men of different periods ; and there are, perhaps, few words in different languages, beyond the names of physical objects, which exactly correspond. The historian should combine the ardour of the active, with the somewhat chilling reflection of the contemplative mind : he should describe events like the epic, sympathise with his actors, and lay bare their feelings like the dramatic poet : he should, as it were, live among men with whom he can only become acquainted through the lifeless medium of books, and know their capacities for acting, and the nature of the materials with which and on which they had to act, before he can perfectly appreciate what they did or left undone, or convey a profitable lesson to his own and future ages. He should be cautious in generalising, acute in sifting evidence, neither obtrusive nor meagre in his reflections, quick to comprehend, and discriminating to portray character. Lastly, without being rhetorical, he should cultivate force and beauty of expression and harmony of periods, almost as diligently as those writers whose chief object is style.

After all, the natural difficulties of the historian

are insuperable. He sees always "through a glass darkly," and therefore it is that Aristotle has called poetry, that is dramatic poetry, "something more philosophical and real than history*," for the poet can give a complete picture of his own creations, the historian can trace but the meagre outline of imperfect knowledge. This last view of the subject, however, shews history too much like one of the fine arts, with which it has little relation: it has far higher practical uses.

History, without a change in the faculties of man, which we can neither foresee nor understand, can obviously never become a science. With facts we are but imperfectly acquainted, with men still less, yet to determine with any degree of certainty what men will do from what men have done, we must know not only the facts and the men, but the different influence which the same facts would have on differently constituted minds. If it could ever be demonstrated that all men would act in the same manner under the same circumstances, our faith would be fearfully shaken in that personal and inward circle, which is "above three hundred and sixty," and in respect of which "the earth is a point†."

If we cannot have both, the picturesque history

* Φιλοσοφώτερον καὶ σπουδαιότερον ποίησις ἱστορίας ἐστίν.—
Poetica.

† Sir Thomas Browne.

is, perhaps, preferable to the philosophical, or as the Germans would say, the objective is better than the subjective. It is observable that the men, who at various periods have made the greatest impression on society, have been distinguished for strong feelings, a sanguine temperament, and a vivid imagination. Luther and Calvin moved men's minds, not so much because they argued well, as because they felt and spoke strongly. To measure such men accurately, it is necessary to sympathise with them, and as few combine in so high a degree powerful intellects with strong passions, the more simple and less ambitious mode of describing them is commonly the more satisfactory.

Again, to give a living picture of a departed age, the historian must understand its language. Now, the natural language of mankind even in a refined age, and yet more decidedly in a barbarous one, is figurative. Figurative language soonest excites our passions, gratifies our tastes, and impresses itself upon our memories; yet it is a dangerous tool to meddle with. Many pseudo-philosophers, not feeling themselves equal to its management, have inveighed loudly against it, as if the fault were in the machine, and not in the workman. Logical inaccuracies, however, are quite as common as metaphorical, and more mischievous. The logical mind is, indeed, the most imperfect, for it is easier

for the merely imaginative man to understand logic than for the mere logician to understand the picturesque.

Professedly philosophical histories are often impertinent. A skilful narrative will suggest reflections. Who would not learn more from Herodotus or Froissart, than from the speculations of the philosophers of the last century on what kind of death a nation must die? As if the political death of a nation were a necessary event! The confounding of nations with individuals has led to strange mistakes.

There are many nations in whose histories the facts, and the conclusions to be drawn from them, are so exceedingly uniform, that to know one is to know the whole class. Such is the case with oriental histories; where we have a great despot in the capital; a number of petty despots in the provinces, individually rebelling, whenever any one of them is strong enough; no respect for life or property; no privileged classes; free trade; a revenue collected almost exclusively from land; and unvarying manners and customs. European despotisms, modified and counteracted by a great variety of circumstances, deserve to be studied separately, though not with equal attention. But the histories, beyond comparison the most fertile in moral phenomena, and therefore the most interesting and the most

valuable, are those of nations under constitutional governments. Each of these has its peculiarities, not only because no two constitutions were ever framed precisely similar in all respects, but because circumstances of time and place would alone be sufficient to produce differences in the results, though there were none in the systems.

The history of ancient Greece is eminently biographical: never were great men so numerous and so powerful, never did genius shine with so much brilliance. Yet there was little tranquillity, much injustice, much national and private calamity. Neither did liberty, imperfect as it was, or, to speak more correctly, independence, last long. Many offices were filled by large classes of citizens in rotation, and thus, as Sismondi observes, in speaking of the republics of Italy, so similar to those of Greece, each man was induced to submit to considerable restraint as a subject, that he might be less restrained in the exercise of his "brief authority" as a magistrate, when his turn arrived. Such a state of things, however favourable, from incessant competition, to the development of talent, was unstable in the extreme, and naturally tended to despotism, none being really free, and the classes ineligible to the higher offices of the state ready to acquiesce in any change, inasmuch as no condition can be worse than that of the servant of a thousand masters.

The history of Rome is the progress to empire of an ambitious people, and yet perhaps their ambition was rather accidental than systematic. The patricians, threatened with a diminution of their power at home, sought, by acquiring consideration abroad, to divert the plebeians from turning their attention to the privileges of an exclusive class. Hence perpetual wars. For the people in every country, from restlessness, love of excitement, national vanity, or whatever cause, like nothing better than fighting, if the nobles are but ready to lead them: and the noble Roman was no laggard. The plebeian soldier, when he returned to tell of his battles, in speaking of some more resolute charge of the enemy, which made victory for a time doubtful, could say

“ Cædunt Lepidos, cæduntque Camillos,
Corvinosque simul, Torquataque nomina legum *.”

The policy of the Romans, in acquiring their empire bit by bit, and by incorporating the conquered nations with themselves, has been often remarked, and is not without its imitators in our own day. The sound and truly philanthropical system of the balance of power, seasonably and vigorously acted upon by the more civilised states, will prevent the less civilised from profiting by the Roman example, however well-inclined.

* Lucan.

No age, perhaps, that had gone before or that has followed has so great an affinity with our own as the last century of the Roman republic. The great men of those times, and they were many, were emphatically gentlemen, men of the world, distinguished for their acquaintance with all classes of society, shrewd, sensual and refined, little susceptible of strong emotions, and indifferent to human suffering, provided it was a means of accomplishing their ends. We have here too the first recorded age of terror, as Sylla and Marius successively gained the ascendancy, which each employed to proscribe the other's adherents. Sylla's was a character not common in history. Never was man more unscrupulous in his mode of attaining power, or sooner tired of it, when attained. Sylla was no favourite with the fawning Romans of the empire, because Cæsar, his more renowned imitator, belonged to the opposite faction; but there must have been something about him more than commonly grand, or the unlimited power, which he dared to resign, would have debased, instead of ameliorating his nature. In this respect he resembles Cromwell, rather than Alexander, Cæsar or Napoleon, all three of whom proved themselves unequal to the weight of their fortunes; and Cæsar was the least excusable of all. Alexander, the sovereign of an obscure province of northern and barbarous Greece, had

conquered the whole country from the Egean Sea to the Indus before he was thirty years of age. Napoleon, in the course of a very few years, from the humble rank of a subaltern officer, raised himself to that of emperor of the French, and virtual ruler of half Europe. But Cæsar was born a noble Roman: the highest dignities of his country, the mistress of the civilised world, were by birth within his grasp: he arrived at supreme power by steps, and at an age when the passions have generally cooled, yet in its exercise he was sometimes as extravagant, as vain, and even as impolitic as a boy.

The fall of the Roman empire, that greatest of all revolutions, gave rise to the notion, that nations, like individuals, must decay; a proposition equally needless and extravagant, if the ruin of the Romans can be accounted for on more simple and obvious grounds, namely, their own corruption and moral degradation, the result of a combination of unfavourable circumstances. It would be strange indeed, if there were a law in the economy of mankind, limiting the prosperity of nations to determinate periods. France counts more than thirteen centuries from the age of Clovis; England more than ten from that of Egbert; the shortest period, exceeding in all probability, notwithstanding the twelve vultures and their typified centuries, the entire duration

of Rome as an independent state. Yet the independence of England and France cannot be said to be in any very imminent danger, however ambitious Cossacks and Calmucks may be of rivalling Goths and Huns. The power of both nations never was greater than at the present moment. There is little danger of national decay where governments let the people alone, and a free constitution gives them something to do. The Romans had no stimulus to exertion, it was in fact dangerous; consequently, pleasure was the chief object of their lives. They had a sensual and brutal religion, and no press: literature, therefore, was inaccessible save to the few, and was, moreover, exceedingly circumscribed. Women were despised and degraded—no element of civilisation remained. Even their refinement, continually on the decline, served only to reveal to them the insipidity of innocence. In no period perhaps with which we are historically acquainted was the amount of wickedness and baseness so great among a given number of human beings. Such a state of things required a tempest to purify the moral atmosphere, and when it came it was tremendous.

But, it may be asked, why did not Christianity regenerate mankind? Real Christians, alas! have been in all ages few: and Christianity, incumbered with an imperial convert, lost its early simplicity in

the folds of the purple. The corruptions of the church seem to take their date from the conversion of Constantine.

Of modern histories, those of England, France, Venice, and the United States of America, seem to have the highest claims on our attention. Among the great nations of antiquity, civil liberty, always imperfect and ill-understood, commonly degenerated before civilisation had reached its highest pitch. In England, on the contrary, liberty and civilisation advanced with equal steps through many centuries, and even, when liberty was apparently retrograde under the Tudors, the firmest foundations were laid for future progress by the emancipation of men's minds from the priestly yoke. It seems peculiar to England that great benefits have flowed from great national calamities. Thus, the wars of the roses, deluging the country with blood on a question of title utterly insignificant to the mass of the people, caused the destruction of the greater part of the ancient nobles. Those, who remained, were too few to form a privileged class, and too weak to resist the subsequent attempts of prince and people to curb their pride and power.

The European rank of England, from the time when the Plantagenets lost their continental possessions, to that of Henry VIII., was low. The

energy of Henry's character, fickle tyrant as he was, his fortunate position as umpire between Charles V. and Francis I., and the reformation in religion, greatly increased the national importance. The prudence of Elizabeth, and her successful rivalry with the most powerful of her contemporaries, raised it still higher. But to develop fully the resources of England was reserved for Cromwell. Historians have been scarcely just to this extraordinary man. Even Mr. Hallam seems to think him inferior to Napoleon. Cromwell, indeed, could not or would not talk like Cæsar or Cicero, yet he surpassed both them and all others in the art of concealing his thoughts under a cloud of words. He was ambitious, hypocritical and unscrupulous; such have been all usurpers. But he certainly loved his country. He realised his proud boast, that he would make the name of an Englishman as much feared and revered as ever was that of a Roman. His mind was comprehensive and grand, and at the same time so definite, energetic and sagacious, that he never attempted what he did not accomplish. He possessed courage, both moral and physical; he was acute and discriminating in his perception of character, and, in particular, of the character of his times; and, what can be said of very few under similar circumstances, he never seemed so great as

on a throne. It is strange to see, how much may be done by one man, and how much more may be undone by his death.

Common sense and indignation against oppression are the most favourable points in the national character of the English. The second of these valuable qualities triumphed at the expense of the first, when the nation, disgusted with puritan tyranny and hypocrisy, flung down its liberties with besotted loyalty at the feet of Charles II. The Stuarts, as if determined to show that kings are not improved by exile, abused the public feeling in their favour to the utmost ; and the result was the dethronement of James II., the least irregular precedent in history for the treatment of an unconstitutional king.

A distinction is observable in the character of the two great revolutions of the seventeenth century ; the first was eminently popular, the second aristocratic. At the commencement of the civil war the great body of the nobility and gentry was unquestionably on the side of the king. On the other hand the popular cause derived its energy from religion and liberty, sources more inspiring than feudal supremacy and illustrious names. But the leaders of the Long Parliament went too far for stability ; a truth which the experience of an age of revolutions has now induced most thinking men to recognise. Much of what they did was consequently

undone. The following reign, the most disgraceful in our annals, was of some service, as it opened the eyes of the nation; and when James attempted to change the national religion by unconstitutional means, and what such an attempt by such a man necessarily implied, to restore its confiscated property to his own church, he frightened the wealthiest and least revolutionary class of society; the lower classes were either passive, or joined with his enemies, and he was finally ejected without a struggle.

The period from the revolution of 1688 to the American war is the most barren and uninteresting not only in English, but in European history. There were the usual quarrels of princes among themselves for the usual objects, but the people fought only for the choice of masters. The great statesman of this period was certainly Sir Robert Walpole. Like Pitt, and the younger and greater Cecil, that hunchback Salisbury, who had "no superior as a courtier, no equal as an orator for dignity and grace*," he possessed in an eminent degree the peculiar kind of sagacity and administrative talent, which the anomalous constitution of England requires in a minister. Walpole has been attacked with much warmth for governing by corruption, or rather for his carelessness of appearances; for though less decent, he was not more

* History of England, Lardner's Cab. Cycl. vol. iv.

corrupt than other men of his time. But in truth the charge against Walpole, whether of being or of only seeming corrupt cannot be more than partially sustained. His ministry was long popular, never perhaps unpopular: in the great object of his life, the preservation of the throne to the Protestant house of Hanover, he was completely successful; and he gave no inconsiderable degree of attention, the more meritorious as it was not compulsory, to the interests of the middle and lower classes of the community.

The venerable antiquity of English liberty, its successive and hard-won victories over the tyranny of kings, priests and nobles, have added something definite and practical to the English character not observable among the other nations of Europe. In politics Englishmen are less prone than others to mistake words for things, because, from the House of Lords to the parish vestry all classes are habituated to self-government. And where shall we find so solid a security for civil freedom as habit? In charters? Men in power unaccustomed to such a restraint will observe them no longer than they are compelled to do so; and the people soon tire of watching them. In education? The mass of mankind has never yet been more than half-educated at the utmost in any country, and half-education only blinds men to difficulties, and sets them aiming at

impracticabilities. Hence it is that reflecting Englishmen value prescription so highly, and continental speculators not at all. The former have learned, what the latter have not, that the effects of changes are always different from, and generally less beneficial than what was previously anticipated, and that the risk of innovation is worth incurring only to remove a substantial grievance, not to establish a barren principle. There will never in this country be a king of the English.

How little could a reflecting German, under the brilliant dynasty of the Hohenstauffen, have foreseen the existing condition of Germany and France! Superstition destroyed the most splendid race of monarchs that ever sate on a throne. The grandeur of Frederic Barbarossa, had he been born a century later, would have done all, and more than all for Germany, that the craft of Philip Augustus did for France. But Frederic unhappily appeared when men's minds were at the darkest, and popery prevailed. France became concentrated, as Germany divided. How early might European society have been established on a secure basis, how many wars might have been spared, if the wretched dupes of the popes had not overthrown the Hohenstauffen!

The real founder of the French monarchy was Philip Augustus; before his time, with the exception of one great event, not peculiar to France, there is

little to interest in French history. Philip Augustus had the merit of seeing the true policy of a French king, and of acting upon it systematically through a long reign,—the destruction of the great feudatories, finally completed by Louis XI.

France is distinguished by the establishment of the wide-spread feudal system in its most perfect form. If it be true, as some have thought, that the history of a nation is best learned from its laws, how wretched must have been the state of society,—how unprotected the life and property of the subject, at the period of the conversion of allodial into feudal tenures ! The precise date of this remarkable event does not appear ; the change was probably gradual. But the empire of feudalism endured long ; its traces still subsist, after the lapse of nine or ten centuries. The feudal polity must have been wise in its generation, or it would not have struck such deep roots ; but it should serve to show us what little reason we have to envy our ancestors.

Chivalry, as well as feudalism, flourished chiefly in France. With much mummary, characteristic of the times, it must have originated in the generous efforts of a few noble minds among the privileged classes to protect the weak against the strong and the violent. Ridiculed as it has been, for the most part, by vulgar-minded men who could not believe in disinterestedness, it did good service to humanity.

In our own time, doubtless, the objects proposed are far more completely attained, but the means employed have a less ennobling effect on the mind of the instrument.

France had its full share of the calamities which desolated Europe during the middle ages. To the English wars of Edward III. succeeded, after a very short interval, the still more disastrous civil wars of the wretched reign of Charles VI., followed, without breathing time, by another and more ruinous English invasion under Henry V. Yet, although war, and more especially civil war, be the greatest of national calamities, we must not conclude that the misery was altogether without mitigation, even of those miserable times. If the constant sense of the insecurity of life and property brutalises but too many, to some inaction is the worst of all evils. Though the licence with which war was then carried on was extreme, yet that very licence afforded a wider scope for generous actions, and gave opportunities which were not always neglected by the fantastic spirit of chivalry. Circumstances permitted some men to become heroes. The resemblance between the men of the world of the last century of the Roman republic and the men of the world of the present day, is not more striking than that between the heroes of chivalry and the heroes of the Homeric age. The general diffusion of knowledge, caused by the invention of printing,

seems to make the return of such times altogether impossible; and they are therefore the more interesting, not only because the aspect they offer of human nature is one we can ourselves never expect to see, but because it is difficult to comprehend how they could be so near to us and yet so different in character.

Louis XI. of France and Henry VII. of England, two of the three royal Magi of Lord Bacon, followed the same policy, of exalting monarchical at the expense of aristocratical power. But aristocracy is far more tenacious of life than either monarchy or democracy. Within a century from the death of Louis XI, during the religious wars of the sixteenth century, aristocracy again threatened the crown. It was curbed by the dauntless energy of Richelieu, and finally subdued by Louis XIV., in the only way in which aristocracy can be subdued, by compelling the great landed proprietors to continue in constant attendance upon his person, and thus making them strangers on their own estates, and holding out to them every inducement to dissipate their fortunes in the folly and profusion of his court. The Spanish nobles were not suffered to reside on their estates from a similar motive. Louis XIV., however, went beyond his object. He destroyed aristocracy, but he did not care to foresee that monarchy would not therefore necessarily be

a gainer. There was another alternative; the middle and lower classes, ignorant and oppressed, and totally estranged from the territorial aristocracy, became at the Revolution of 1789 the ready dupes of men of their own order, who abused their unexpected elevation to the uttermost.

There were so many circumstances which might have prevented the French Revolution, that it seems the most wonderful thing in the world it ever happened at all. Had the king been a man of common sense or common firmness; had he even been an obstinate fool, and persisted in any system, no matter what; had the ministers limited the number of electors by a reasonable qualification, and not plunged a nation, utterly unaccustomed to self-government, into universal suffrage; had the constitutional assembly adopted a system of tactics which would have prevented the passing of measures of the greatest importance on the impulse of the moment, without deliberation; had the members of the first assembly not voted themselves ineligible to the second; had the nobles, weak as they were, remained at their posts, and not deserted their country, there never would have been a reign of terror. Nothing can be more contrary to the truth than the doctrines of the wicked and absurd school of fatalist historians, who maintain that the enormous crimes of the Revolution were necessary. A necessary crime is an impossibility. But the crimes of

the Revolution produced nothing but evil to the French. They lamentably diminished the amount of the good which would otherwise have resulted from the wiser measures of the period. And after all they have seen and suffered there is not much to be envied in the present state of the French. He must be a profound admirer, indeed, of the “*juste milieu*” who could say,

“ Quòd si non aliam venturo fata Philippo
 Invenere viam, magnòque æterna parantur
 Regna Deis ;

 Jam nihil, O Superi, querimur ; scelera ipsa nefasque
 Hàc mercede placent*.”

As far as a man can be chargeable with events which happened eighty years after his death, and which might have been so easily prevented, Louis XIV. is chargeable with the crimes of the French Revolution. He incumbered the revenues with an enormous debt, and he left no class in the country capable of resisting, or even of controlling a popular outbreak. He was thoroughly selfish in his policy, as in all the actions of his life. He desired to increase his own power and the splendour of his court, and cared not for the consequences to his successors or to France.

The experience of an age of revolutions tends to

* Lucan.

shew that the people cannot be roused in the first instance without just cause *, that they cease to be formidable, and that their interest in politics languishes on the timely concession of reasonable demands, and that extravagant proposals may be resisted with perfect safety from first to last. In the French Revolution the contemptible cowardice of the Jacobins at the dissolution of their club shews with what ease those frantic miscreants might have been put down from the first, had a few rational men withstood them with resolution and calmness. No people, perhaps, understand liberty less than the French. A fine-sounding word is to them what a scarlet rag is to turkeys. They roar for a republic, and care not for a habeas corpus. Religion and morality are the real wants of France. An immoral and irreligious people cannot long be free, because they are essentially selfish; they are incapable of comprehending any other motive of action than self-interest, and freedom requires self-sacrifice.

The best guides to the opinions and feelings of any period are the popular works of the period. And this applies to our own as well as to past ages, for no man can become intimately acquainted with more than a very limited number of his contemporaries. If this be true, and we are to judge of the

* The rebellion in Canada seems to be an exception to this rule.

French by the tone of their popular books, their public mind must be diseased to a degree almost unprecedented. Every thing seems unsettled and unstable, and there is a feverish craving after excitement, which will be gratified at any cost.

The most remarkable by far of modern French laws is that enforcing the division of landed property among all the children at the parent's death, and in proportion to their number diminishing the amount which he has the power of devising. There is probably no law which could effect so great a change among all classes of society. The whole of its results no man can foresee, as they must be different in every generation. Territorial influence under such a system is impossible, and therefore as there remains no class in society naturally conservative, the stability of all existing institutions becomes exceedingly precarious. The smaller the social particles, with the greater facility are they agitated and made to change places, until tranquillity becomes the exception and not the rule. It is doubtful whether liberty, in a country long peopled, can be maintained without an aristocracy. The question is one to which history gives no satisfactory answer. Setting aside the more obvious contingency, the restoration of aristocracy, it may be worth while to speculate for a moment on the probable course of events under such a system. Let

society be a vast plain, with one abrupt eminence whereon shines a constitutional crown. We have supposed aristocracy excluded at all hazards ; either, then, the existing system of a constitutional monarchy must continue, or be subverted by the despotism of one, or by that of the majority. A monarchy without an aristocracy, as it affords peculiar temptations and opportunities to the king, requires more than common watchfulness from the controlling powers ; widely diffused as those powers must necessarily be, from the numbers who exercise them, and timid and irresolute as electors exercising such powers will be frequently found, on account of the great distance which separates them from the executive. The masses, besides, in all countries, unless their misery be extreme, soon tire of political agitation. They soon discover, not only that a man's private affairs are of infinitely greater importance to him than the affairs of the nation, but also that political agitation checks the buying and selling by which they live. They see too through a mist of unmeaning words and false pretences the real cupidity and baseness of demagogues. In such a state of public feeling let there be a selfish man of an enterprising character on the throne. Is it a difficult task for him, having on his side the "prestige" of authority and the forms of law, to avail himself of a moment of national indignation against the authors of those extraordinary excesses and outrages which occur

occasionally in all countries, to increase his own power at the expense of the liberties of his people? Such seems to be the course of events in France; liberty contracts continually, and, if the king pleases, may go on contracting until there is as little left of it as of the "*peau de chagrin*." We shall have occasion more fitly to consider the case of the despotism of the majority in speaking of America.

The effect of the French law of inheritance in diminishing the number of great capitalists comes within the province of political economy. If it is desirable that the wealth of a nation should increase rapidly, individual accumulation should be encouraged as much as possible, because money attracts money. Speaking loosely, it may be said, that the attraction increases directly as the mass. But this rule seems commonly to be confined to the case of the first accumulator, for in practice we see that enormous wealth is seldom retained in the same family for many generations. The wealth of individuals is not too great in a country where one man in the course of his life can accumulate as much in trade or a profession as the richest proprietor has inherited.

A large capitalist, it may be said, frequently squanders immense sums in a comparatively unproductive manner, and he has less inducement to employ his money productively than other men. Be it so. But the power of a large capitalist, when he

chooses to employ his wealth in a manner beneficial to society, is far greater than that of a number of inferior capitalists, the aggregate of whose incomes equals his own. Notwithstanding the knowledge men have gained of the power of combination, the great improvements of the late Duke of Sutherland in the north of Scotland would certainly not have been made so soon, perhaps not made at all, if his estates had been divided among a number of small proprietors.

Looking at the French law of inheritance in the most favourable point of view, and supposing, what its advocates contend for, to be the case, that it would not cause the division of properties below a certain amount, and fixing that amount very high, still it must materially increase the number of the less productive labourers, and consequently check the increase of capital. Let an estate of one hundred thousand a year be parcelled out among fifty proprietors. The fifty small proprietors would employ more servants, horses, and carriages than the single large proprietor; but the aggregate of the sums which they could together afford to lay out in the improvement of their several estates would fall far short of what the single large proprietor could appropriate to the same purpose.

Another consequence of an extensive division of property is, that many labourers are employed to do imperfectly what, through the agency of large

capitalists, a few labourers might do effectually ; and thus the labour of a country, which is the mainstay of its capital, is wasted. About two thirds of the population of France, and about one third of the population of England, is employed in agriculture ; yet English agriculture is beyond comparison superior to French.

The state of a country without a large spending class is unfavourable to manners, to literature, and the arts, of all which the multitude are coarse and contemptuous judges. The advantages of these matters are not sufficiently obvious to the money-making, uneasy class of society. In works of art they require effect rather than truth and delicacy, and from poets and orators, vehemence rather than elegance and philosophy. The most successful popular orator is usually the man who talks strongest, loudest and longest.

The most important point of view under which a law can be contemplated is its moral effect, its object being not so much to make people happier, as to make them better. A law enforcing the division of property on the death of the parent must increase, at least for some generations, the number of idle men. If all the sons find enough to support them without exertion, in ordinary cases they will not exert themselves, particularly in a country where there is no higher caste to be attained. Few men can live without some occupation ; the occu-

pation easiest to be had, most obvious and most interesting to the idle, is gaming, which always therefore abounds where they abound. In France, though there are none who play for such large sums as a few do in England, because, indeed, there are none so rich, yet the proportion which the gamblers bear to the whole population is, unquestionably, much greater. If it be said that the want of moral and religious principle in France is the cause of the extensive prevalence of this vice, and not the law of inheritance, it is answered that the law of inheritance increases the number of those who have the means of gaming. In England the same law would not produce the same results, for the habits of the people differ materially. A Frenchman looks for his amusement to the town, an Englishman to the country, and gaming is a town rather than a country vice. But that great evils in England would flow from a compulsory division of property, few require to be convinced.

A sentimental advocate of this most arbitrary law would say, that a man's younger children are as dear to him as his eldest, and that, therefore, he is bound by natural affection to provide equally for the happiness of them all. But this is not stating the case correctly. Idleness and happiness, employment and misery, are not synonymous terms. A younger son, in a profession which calls all the energies of his mind into action, is a happier and

a more useful member of society than a listless haunter of cafés and gaming-houses, or a dog-and-horse-loving squireen. This, it may be said, is proving too much. It follows from what has just been stated that the eldest son is worse off than the younger; and so he certainly is, unless his estate is large enough to occupy his mind in the improvement of it, and of the condition of those who live upon it, and to give him a determinate position in society.

As by the French law money paid by the parent in his life-time for the advancement in the world of any one of his children is considered part of that child's inheritance, (it is difficult, indeed, to conceive how a law compelling the division of property could be effectually carried into execution without such a provision,) a wide door is obviously opened for family disputes.

It is hazardous to speculate on the great experiment working out in France through this remarkable law; but it appears probable that it will in the end be found impracticable, and consequently, sooner or later, be repealed. That the division of landed estates does go on, is proved by the rapid diminution of the number of electors.

Venice was established the first, and destroyed the last,—with the exception, indeed, of San Marino,—of the modern republics of Italy. The inhabitants

of the lagunes seem to have enjoyed a sort of doubtful independence for more than two centuries before the accession of the first doge, and the ducal form of government lasted eleven. As men commonly make little allowance for the influence of circumstances, and attribute effects to their most obvious causes; as the idea of superior wisdom is naturally annexed to institutions which have endured long; and as the Venetian government, from the commencement of the fourteenth century, was the most aristocratic which ever existed; it is not surprising that the constitution of Venice should have been thought wise, and that to aristocracy should have been ascribed the general stability and absence of intestine discord which distinguished the Venetians amidst their greatest disasters. Yet this is far from being the whole state of the case. The Venetian nobles, in proportion to the rest of the population, were exceedingly numerous, they were without territorial influence, and they lived under a constant reign of terror, effectually controlled by the most mysterious and arbitrary of all tribunals, which struck no one knew how, when, or where. Free from all responsibility to the nation at large, their responsibility to a very limited number of their own body,—first ten, and afterwards three,—armed with an authority above all laws, was as complete as human ingenuity could devise. An aristocracy

so rigidly exclusive could not otherwise have continued so long without becoming odious to the people. The crimes of the nobles were punished for the most part as severely, perhaps more severely than those of other men. Without an exclusive aristocracy the council of ten and the inquisition of state would not have been necessary ; with an exclusive aristocracy those tyrannical institutions saved the Venetian citizens from a worse tyranny.

Admitting that the Venetian institutions did produce stability and internal harmony, disturbed however, by several rude shocks, yet those advantages were dearly bought at the price of general insecurity of life and property. The system, too, crippled the national energy, drove men to dissipation as a solitary resource, and clipped and pared down every thing great to the same stunted level. The relentless decemvirs imprisoned thought and action, and thereby prepared the way for that most inglorious fall, which, as a spectacle of national degradation, has few parallels in the history of mankind. The illustrious families of Loredano, Veniero, Gradenigo, and Cornaro, the most ancient nobles of Europe, in the hour of danger could furnish nothing but sonorous names. Aristocracy is intolerant of individual excellence. The only great historical characters of Venice were

“ Blind old Dandolo,
Th’ octogenarian chief, Byzantium’s conquering foe,”

Zeno, and Pisani, the heroes of the war of Chioggia, and Morosini, the defender of Candia, and the conqueror of the Morea. This is a scanty scroll indeed, and three out of these four were treated by their countrymen with the grossest injustice.

It is observable, that from the time the aristocratic system was fairly established in Venice every successive change in the constitution tended to diminish the number, and increase the authority of the depositaries of real power. In all struggles between aristocracy and democracy, aristocracy has immense advantages. Men of rank and wealth naturally look upon themselves as entitled to power, and the inferior classes, from various causes, are commonly but too ready to admit their claims. Popular effervescence, aroused occasionally by flagrant acts of oppression, commonly soon subsides. The people have neither the means nor the leisure constantly to watch over the political conduct of their superiors; but aristocracy never sleeps, and is at all times prepared to seize whatever the remainder of the community does not understand, or does not value.

Democracy predominates to as great an extent in the United States of America as aristocracy did in Venice. There are no two countries whose institutions appear, at first sight, more dissimilar; yet it may be doubted, whether both are not equally

unfavourable to the moral and intellectual development of man. The aristocratic experiment may be said to have been fairly tested in the course of five centuries in Venice; the democratic experiment in the United States is but begun. The Venetian territory was limited by nature to a few acres of barren sand, for the provinces were all conquests; the territory of the United States is of immense extent and fertility; yet, notwithstanding these numerous and important moral and physical discrepancies, there is a resemblance between the condition of Venice in the last century, and that of America now. The government of Venice was despotic, both in form and substance; that of America is not formally despotic, but the tyranny of the majority is more absolute and far more searching even than that of the Council of Ten. In some respects, the comparison is to the advantage of the Venetians, for their oligarchs did not deny justice to the citizens, whom they shut out from political power; the despotic middle classes of America, exercising the triple functions of legislator, judge and jury, do deny not only political power, but justice to their slaves. Both countries seem equally ill-suited to a man who likes to think for himself, and to say what he thinks. A Venetian who chose to write or speak publicly against aristocracy, did so with the prospect of disappearing for ever from

the eyes of his friends, in the course of twenty-four hours. The punishment of an American, who dared to condemn democracy, would be less cruel, for men are become more civilised, but it would be the severest which society could inflict without calling in the assistance of law. Occasionally, there may be popular tumults endangering the property and life of an obnoxious person, but the punishments of society usually consist in a series of petty mortifications, inflicting the tortures of martyrdom without its dignity. In America too, as all political distinctions are conferred by the people, an ambitious man, honest and courageous enough to oppose a popular prejudice, effectually bars his own path to power. The gay Italians did easily without thinking, and made pleasure the only pursuit of their lives. The graver Anglo-Americans, true to their northern origin, and influenced by the great physical advantages of their country, interest themselves in little save electioneering and making money, and listening to the incense daily offered up to their national vanity by their public orators and public press. Democracy and aristocracy are equally jealous of talent: aristocracy would look down upon it from some lofty eminence; democracy would not suffer it to rise above the plain. Under both systems thought is proscribed as dangerous. We have seen that Venice produced few great men; the

existing system in America cannot be said to have produced one, for Washington, Jefferson, and Franklin were formed in another era.

It seems to be an evil inherent in the nature of pure democracies that, in cases which strongly interest the masses, there is no security for the due administration of justice. In England, the popular tendencies of the jury are counteracted by the aristocratic feelings of the judge, but in America judge and jury are equally in dread of the tyrant majority. It is easy to bear the frown of a prince ; in such contests, a man of spirit and integrity is often supported by a powerful class, and is never without friends. But a contest with the majority is a contest with society, with a tribunal from whose sentence there is no appeal, and whose punishments, without injuring the body, as Tocqueville expresses it, "go straight to the soul." To enable him to stand up against a superior power, a man must find sympathy somewhere, but in this case he meets with nothing but discouragement on all sides, even those who agree with him dare not betray their opinions, lest they should be denounced in the same manner.

No men are fit to enjoy unlimited power, and to feel that they enjoy it. Various recent outrages in the United States, arising out of the excitement of the slave question, seem to render it doubtful

whether the majority will continue to obey the laws, as they become better acquainted with their own strength and the real weakness of the executive.

“Je ne connais pas de pays”, says Tocqueville, in one of his striking chapters on the tyranny of the majority in the United States, “où il règne en général moins d’indépendance d’esprit et de véritable liberté de discussion qu’en Amérique.” If this sentence had been published in America, by an American author, the fact of its publication would have augured the approach of better days; as it is, the works of living Americans will, we suspect, be searched for such an opinion in vain. And yet matters were differently ordered in the ancient republics of Greece. The Athenians had their sycophants, base men, who, in other circumstances, would have cringed as eagerly to kings and nobles as they did there to the populace, yet that populace could endure to be told disagreeable truths, and even to be laughed at. The Athenians applauded the satire which Aristophanes showered on themselves and their demagogues. Would the Americans do the same? If not, why should the American democracy have less greatness of mind than the Athenian? The reason is perhaps to be found in the undue predominance of the middle class in America.

In all countries the men of the middle classes are the most satisfied with themselves, and the least

disposed to admire intellectual excellence. The higher orders, more cultivated, are interested by an appeal to their taste; the lower, more warm, by an appeal to their feelings. But the middle classes, though more regular in their moral conduct than either of the former, are, from the nature of their pursuits, more sordid and calculating, and at the same time more vulgar, because they are perpetually attempting to appear what they are not. To make money, the great object of their lives, mental cultivation is not necessary, nor indeed mental power, "for riches are not always to men of understanding;" their self-love is not exposed to the same mortifications as that of the higher classes in a constitutional country, for they do not compete with each other in trials of intellect, nor is their conviction of inferiority, though felt, so constant and so galling as that of the lower classes. There is also another reason for the want of humility observable among the middle ranks. Every man naturally thinks that kind of knowledge most important which is most beneficial to himself. A tradesman is necessarily better acquainted with his own trade than his customers can be, among whom his life is spent; their ignorance is his triumph, and furnishes him with continual matter for self-applause. Thus his habits are singularly unfavourable to self knowledge, to "setting his mind at a distance and making

it its own object * ;” and without self-knowledge no man can bear reproof.

In matters of taste it would be very unfair to compare the Americans with the Athenians, the most distinguished of all the nations of the earth for their vivid perception of “glorious beauty”, who forgave the satire for the sake of the point; but deficiencies of taste will not account for moral inferiority.

Next to the tyranny of the majority, instability is the greatest evil of democracies. Constitutional changes are made continually in the United States, as was also the case in Athens and Florence. Such changes are pernicious, as they accustom men to consider all existing institutions unsettled, and destroy reverence. There is something interesting and poetical in the continuance of the same laws, dress, manners, and customs through thirty centuries in the east, as there is something irritating and prosaic in the arrogant assumption of superiority with which sciolists of the present day think themselves entitled to look down upon the worthies of old.

The United States of America have been independent for so short a period, the phenomena they present are so novel, and their circumstances so peculiar, that it is perhaps impossible to refer any

* Locke.

given result exclusively to its real cause, or combination of real causes. The Americans, as an independent nation, are little more than half a century old, their form of government is the most democratic that ever existed, while a large portion of their population, irrevocably distinguished from the remainder by colour and feature, is held in the most abject slavery; their territory, in proportion to their population, is of such extent and fertility that no man need be poor who has health and strength, and they have no aristocracy, or hereditary spending class. A conspiracy of the slaves, the separation of the southern states from the northern, differing as they do in character and interests, and the formation of an aristocracy, seem to be the chief convulsions which the United States have to dread, unless indeed anarchy should result from excessive relaxation of the powers of the executive. Slavery is the great blot of the American character, an anomaly which the tyrant majority has hitherto shewn no peculiar anxiety to remove. If it is not speedily either abolished or mitigated, there will probably sooner or later be a servile war in the slave states, attended, like the insurrection of the Moors in the Alpujarras, by all the horrible outrages which men may be expected to commit who have endured enormous wrongs. The Union has been seriously threatened already, and can hardly continue after

the population becomes dense; even if it lasts so long. Aristocracy is natural to man; proscription only increases the temptation to pluck the forbidden fruit. How can it be otherwise, when, putting the advantages of birth out of the question, men are equal in nothing; health, strength, opportunities, body or mind. Travellers give abundant proofs of the fondness of the Americans for such titular distinctions as their system permits. A class has begun to appear which votes politics vulgar, and abandons them with a certain contempt, which in time will make itself felt, to its shoemakers and tailors. Advances may be made gradually, social distinctions may be set off against political, thus the many may cease to value what the few affect to despise, and in some moment of national apathy aristocracy may rise like "a giant refreshed with wine." Aristocracy we suspect is less hated in America than in France; the Americans have not smarted under its lash like the French; their law of inheritance does not enforce the division of property; it leaves the parent the power of devising the whole as he pleases, and only provides for its equal distribution among all the children in the absence of a will.

No single individual since Luther has exercised so great and extensive a moral influence on mankind as Jefferson. His object, which he pursued through life with a relentless energy which gives him a dis-

tinguished place among the worthies of history, was the establishment of a pure democracy in the United States. Eminently favoured by circumstances, he was completely successful in his design. His sagacity may be questioned, his political honesty cannot. The American Revolution introduced a new era: as the first in the order of time, it may be termed the parent of the revolutions of our revolutionary age; and America still stands, a living, and to a certain extent a successful precedent, an inexhaustible theme for the declamations of all the advocates of change. It is most desirable that so grand an experiment should be fairly tried, and it is to Jefferson, more than to any other man, that we are indebted for the trial. They who expect much from mankind, who maintain that their vices are the result of unfavourable circumstances, misgovernment, delusion or ignorance, may look for the day when the bright sun of human regeneration shall rise in the west; generous minds, whose candour has not been fettered by systems, will acknowledge that hitherto their dreams have not been realised, that increased civilisation and increased liberty have sometimes introduced new moral diseases, while they did not always destroy the old; and that though progressive improvement appear to be on the whole the law of our social existence, contemplating the

future, not only through the dark register of the past, but through our own more impressive experience, we are not justified in auguring any thing peculiarly brilliant from the selfish and base nature of man.

OF RELIGION.

Das Zeichen sieht er prächtig aufgerichtet,
 Das aller Welt zu Trost und Hoffnung steht,
 Zu dem viel tausend Geister sich verpflichtet,
 Zu dem viel tausend Herzen warm gefleht,
 Das die Gewalt des bittern Tods vernichtet,
 Das in so mancher Siegesfahne weht :
 Ein Labequell durchdringt die matten Glieder,
 Er sieht das Kreuz und schlägt die Augen nieder.

Goethe's Geheimnisse.

As the present is comparatively a religious age, and as science seems more popular than literature, it is not surprising that there should be a redundancy of works on natural theology, the link between religion and science. It is an interesting question, which each man will probably answer according to the peculiar character of his mind, whether natural theology has been of service to Christianity. Works on this subject are particularly addressed to atheists, did they ever convert one? Are they not based upon the vain fancy that the source of infidelity is the understanding, and not the heart? They do not profess to make men Christians, but to prepare the way for Christianity, often, it is to be feared, inducing

them to linger so long on the threshold, that they never enter the temple.

But the great objection to most books on Natural Theology is their want of candour ; they are eminently one-sided. They tell us that there are in every thing marks of design, and design must have had a designer ; and from these premises they seem tacitly to assume that the design is benevolent. Large classes of animals must from their physical organization subsist by devouring other animals ; can this be effected without inflicting pain, and is not pain an evil, and is not evil then designed ? Paley speaks of the happiness of flies sporting in the sunshine ; are the same flies less happy when settled on the raw of a galled horse ? What would a heathen think, who, lulled for a time by the smooth periods of some of these declamations on supposititious benevolence into forgetfulness of his own experience, turned at length for the first time to the Bible, and there found that the majority of mankind would be miserable for ever ? What harmony could he discover between the two systems, and would not so fearful a discovery most probably drive him into despair and total unbelief ?

The argument from analogy that “it is not so clear a case that there is nothing in it*,” is a presumption, a strong presumption it may be, but no

* Butler.

more. And here again, the natural theologians give us but one side. Lucretius has argued from analogy against the immortality of the soul in verse, with almost as much force as they have done in favour of it in prose.

“ Præterea gigni pariter cum corpore, et unâ
 Crescere sentinus, pariterque senescere mentem ;
 Nam velut infirmo pueri teneroque vagantur
 Corpore, sic animi sequitur sententia tenuis :
 Inde ubi robustis adolevit viribus ætas,
 Consilium quoque majus, et auctior est animi vis :
 Post ubi jam validis quassatum est viribus ævi
 Corpus, et obtusis ceciderunt viribus artus,
 Claudicat ingenium, delirant linguaque, mensque,
 Omnia deficiunt, atque uno tempore desunt ;
 Ergo dissolvi quoque convenit omnem animai
 Naturam, ceu fumus in altas æeris auras,
 Quandoquidem gigni pariter, pariterque videmus
 Crescere, et ut docui simul ævo fessa fatiscit.”

It is not easy on the same ground to meet these noble lines, equally remarkable for closeness of reasoning and poetical beauty.

However, the argument against atheism from natural theology is certainly irresistible as far as it goes : it can hardly be put in a more pithy and convincing shape than the following :—

“ Dans la société du Baron d'Holbach, Diderot proposa un jour de nommer un avocat de Dieu, et on choisit l'Abbé Galiani. Il s'assit, et débuta ainsi :

“ Un jour à Naples, un homme de la Basilicate prit devant nous six dés dans un cornet, et paria d’amener rafle de six. Je dis cette chance étoit possible. Il l’amena sur-le-champ une seconde fois; je dis la même chose. Il remit les dés dans le cornet trois, quatre, cinq fois, et toujours rafle de six. *Sangue di Bacco*, m’écriai-je, *les dés sont pipés*; et ils l’étoient.

“ Philosophes, quand je considère l’ordre toujours renaissant de la nature, ses lois immuables, ses revolutions toujours constantes dans une variété infinie; cette chance unique et conservatrice d’un univers tel que nous le voyons, qui revient sans cesse, malgré cent autres millions de chances de perturbation et de destruction possibles, je m’écrie: *Certes la nature est pipée!*”—*Stewart’s Dissertation on Metaphysical Philosophy, Encyc. Britan.: Note T.T.*

The best argument for the immortality of the soul, independent of revelation, seems to be that derived, not from outward things, but from the nature of the mind itself, from the desire and the capacity for a better world than this; felt by Cicero when he wrote that fine sentence, which its uncertainty renders so touching; “but if I err* in this matter, in believing the souls of men immortal, I err

* “ Quòd si in hoc erro, quod animas hominum immortales esse credam, libenter erro, nec mihi hunc errorem quò delector, dum vivo extorqueri volo.”

willingly, nor would I that this error, which delights me, should be extorted from me while I live." The same longing after immortality must be felt by every man of fine moral perceptions, particularly if he has acquired a knowledge of the world, and preserved them unimpaired through that dangerous, yet necessary trial. Not the mechanism of plants and animals, but the wide-spread and deep-rooted diffusion of evil, and the incomprehensible dispensation of rewards and punishments in this life, drove the wise ancients to look for a better. How earnestly would Plato and Cicero have condemned the apathy with which we listen to things near and clear to us, when they felt so deep an interest in them, though they saw them not, even from afar off! With what delight would they have contemplated the sole unmixed proof of the divine benevolence, the atonement of the Son of God for the sins of men! If all else be dark and dubious, here at least there is light. Strange that this mighty fact, the most perspicuous and least entangled point in the whole moral and physical system, the vital principle of Christianity, constituting the essential difference between it and all other religions, without which it is no more than "sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal," should be a stumbling-block to any man before whom it has been fairly laid?

It has been well shown by Abercrombie, in his

admirable and unpretending work on the Moral Feelings, that the Deity, speaking even philosophically, cannot forgive. Forgiveness implies either an acknowledgment that the law is unjust, sympathy with the criminal, or doubt of his guilt. Neither of these can be predicated of infinite knowledge and infinite goodness without a contradiction in terms. It would be well for many did they reflect that, when they profess to trust in the mercy of God, it is not mercy they expect from him but weakness; mercy, which is inconsistent with the purity of the divine nature. God indeed is merciful; the death of the Son of God on the cross for the sins of men is an instance of mercy beyond what tongue can express or mind conceive; but he is also pure, and, being pure, he cannot pardon sin without atonement.

Christianity differs essentially from all other religions, and from all human moral systems in this, that it teaches us how abominable all sin is in the sight of God, and as a consequence the necessity of humility, a doctrine not to be found in the works of heathen philosophers. Repentance can refer only to the future; the sin committed has already become a portion of the irrevocable past. Sin cannot be forgiven without repentance, because sin is in the mind, and therefore lasts mentally from the moment of the commission of the act to the moment of

repentance; an unrepentant state of mind is sin; but repentance can in many cases make little or no atonement to injured man, and in no case can it make atonement to the offended holiness of God. It follows then, that if the purity of the Deity be admitted, an atonement for sin is indispensable; and that atonement, we are taught by the Bible, was made by Him, who, being without sin himself, was alone capable of expiating ours.

The doctrine, that a man has no control over his belief, and consequently is not responsible for it, is so agreeable to the supineness and carelessness of our nature, so suitable to the vulgar latitudinarianism of our times, which its professors fancy philosophical, that it is not surprising it should be popular. No man who has read the Bible requires to be told that this doctrine is unscriptural; it remains to be seen whether it is rational. Admitting that perfect sincerity in the investigation of truth, whatever result it may arrive at, deserves reward rather than punishment, where, we ask, is such sincerity to be found? Our love of truth, like every thing human, is imperfect; it is not unmixed with alloy even in the noblest and purest minds; and if any man who knows any thing of his own heart, of the world of men, or the world of books, can persuade himself that it is his in its utmost integrity, he must possess an intrepidity of self-deception of

which it is to be hoped there are few examples. None love truth thoroughly, most men only so far as it suits their purposes ; and the only reasons why there could be a moment's doubt on the subject are, that the love of truth differs in degree, and that the same temptations have not the same effect on different minds. Pride has perverted some, vanity many more. Of five of the most remarkable of modern infidels, Voltaire, Rousseau, Bolingbroke, Hume, and Gibbon, the ruling passion was vanity. They liked to shew that they were above thinking with the crowd. The cause of the unbelief of many ancient heathen philosophers seems to have been pride. The religion of the cross was to them, as the apostle expresses it, "foolishness." Many, perhaps the majority of mankind, do not feel interest enough in the subject to examine it with the attention it requires. They are "infidels as dogs are infidels *" they have never thought on the subject.

But it is incumbent on those who maintain that a man is not responsible for his belief, not only to find instances of perfect sincerity in the investigation of truth, but also of indefatigable zeal. Not a single opportunity of discovering the truth must be neglected, and each individual opportunity must be not only not neglected, but improved to the utmost.

* Johnson.

Who can say that he has done this? Where is the man who has sought religious truth with perfect sincerity and unwearied earnestness? If there be none such, it is clear there can be none who are irresponsible for their belief.

It will readily be conceded that different minds require different degrees of evidence, but to justify infidelity a great deal more must be done. The man who assumes that his mind is incapable of being convinced by the existing evidence for Christianity must prove that his mind is what he asserts it to be, by never acting throughout his life in any important affairs on evidence inferior in credibility to the evidence for Christianity. Here, again, is a test which no infidel can stand. The credulity of many religious sceptics in all matters save religion has reached such a pitch as to become absolutely ludicrous. They are ready to believe that the brain secretes thought, or any other absurdity, to escape the immortality of the soul. Does it not then follow that there must have been some other motive than what they choose to call inadequate evidence for their rejection of Christianity? The truth is, the man whose understanding only is convinced is no Christian. There can be no humility, no conviction of sin, no rejection of self-dependence, no trust in God, in the scriptural sense of the word no faith, without the interference of the heart. In this

matter all observation, all experience of our common nature tend to confirm the language of the Bible, “with the heart man believeth unto righteousness.”

The repugnance of many to take their notions of the Deity from the Bible, their predilection for supplying the place of his positive revealed character with a vague abstraction of their own fancy, though sufficiently common in the present, appears to have been far more frequent in the last age. The latitudinarian reaction, caused by the austerity of the Puritans, lasted indeed throughout the whole of the eighteenth century. Now, however, it seems nearly worn out; existing latitudinarianism is of a different school, and does not require to be attributed to so remote a source. There are many symptoms tending to show that religion has really advanced among us. Places of worship are better attended, the Sabbath is better observed, the number of religious and charitable societies has increased beyond all precedent, a considerable portion of the population takes a decided interest in the conversion of the heathen, which has now for many years been carried on with much zeal and some success; and great numbers are to be found in all classes to whom religion is the most interesting of all subjects, and who feel no shame or hesitation in expressing strong religious sentiments whenever an opportunity occurs. Infidel publications are few, and little noticed.

No formal attack on Christianity has been made for a long period by any author of name. Infidels there are many, but public opinion discountenances them, and compels them to observe some decency of external deportment. No candidate for a seat in Parliament dares avow himself an infidel on the hustings. Men highly eligible in other respects have even been rejected on the solitary ground of real or supposed infidelity.

So far all is well, yet the picture is not without its shades. There is danger in making religion popular, as we have already begun to experience. There is something too much of outward profession, and many religious persons are disagreeably distinguished by certain peculiarities, the absence of any one of which reduces the delinquent to the state of an officer on parade without his epaulettes, and incapacitates him for the enjoyment of the title of "serious;" as extravagant asceticism, a canting phraseology, and indifference to all secular subjects. Their asceticism is shown in a sweeping condemnation of all amusements; among women, by a studied plainness and even coarseness of dress, requiring, perhaps, as much or more trouble to select than the customary frills and flounces of their stations; but, like the cloak of Diogenes, possessing the advantage of making the wearers more conspicuous. The canting phraseology, or

unnecessary use of religious language in the ordinary occurrences of life, sometimes approaches the nauseous ostentation of the Puritans. A natural result of indifference to secular subjects is ignorance of them; and this, with many religious people, is gross, particularly with respect to history and miscellaneous literature. Physical science, as treating of the works of the creation, and therefore connected with religion, they do not entirely neglect. The taste of the religious world is such as might be expected, for taste there can hardly be without cultivation. The number of editions which the pointless ill-nature and tumid verbosity of Pollok, and the elaborate nonsense of Robert Montgomery have run through, is a sufficiently striking proof of "serious" notions of poetical excellence. Add to these an immense variety of religious prose publications, circulated in all directions, written in the most grovelling style, and totally devoid of literary merit, which indeed the authors sometimes take the very unnecessary trouble formally to disclaim, as if they thought it sinful. It is strange that men with so noble a model as the Bible before them, and human hearts in their bosoms, should know

"So little of the springs that move mankind."*

But they seem anxiously to avoid contemplating the Bible in a literary point of view, and this is

* Philip van Artevelde.

probably one reason why so few clergymen read it well.

Men who do not love knowledge seldom really love either thought or liberty; they are the slaves of a system themselves which they want the courage or energy to examine, and it mortifies their self-love to see others emancipated from the same trammels. The spirit of the Church of England of the present day is widely different from that which animated the reformers of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Circumstances threw the reformers into the arms of civil freedom, but their case is not ours. The popish hatred of dissent, incident not only to popery, but to all religious establishments, has again raised its head, and extended its pernicious shoots far and wide. Hence the superstitious jargon of apostolical succession, a distinction to which one Protestant sect cannot possibly be entitled to the exclusion of all the rest, the doctrine of the inalienable nature of ecclesiastical property, and other similar absurdities. A still more unfortunate result of this resurrection of exploded intolerance is the air of restraint and consequent mediocrity which is insensibly creeping over the writings of our divines. The works of clergymen are easily discernible from those of other men.

Yet it would be unjust to say that the English clergy do not love knowledge. It is necessary to

distinguish between the Arminians and Calvinists, the two classes into which they are divided. The Arminians are many of them deeply learned, yet they dislike freedom of thought and action, and it is from them that the most nauseous displays of political and religious bigotry have recently proceeded. Though the piety of many of them is unquestionable, they are a political rather than a religious body; they preach without scruple against the articles to which they compel others to subscribe; they make religion political, not politics religious. The Calvinistic clergy, on the other hand, though they love not thought and dread liberty, which they confound with licence, though they look upon knowledge as a snare, tempting men to wander from the simplicity of scriptural truth, are not a political body. Their political principles are substantially the same with those of the Arminians, their sympathies are rather with the oppressors than the oppressed, but religion is with the majority of them the mainspring of their actions. They are the chiefs of what is emphatically styled the religious world, the idols of women, the promoters of missions, tracts, Sunday-schools, temperance societies, and a vast variety of institutions, few or none of which do not produce more good than evil, at the moderate expense of certain periodical confusions of tongues, where the quantity

of nonsense uttered is not upon the whole more inordinate than might be expected. The misfortune is that regular attendances at these conventicles, together with the peculiarities before enumerated, are converted into sectarian badges, and made the means of thrusting those who want them out of the sacred pale. Hence spiritual pride, presumption and uncharitableness, some of the worst features of our religious state.

It is remarkable that, whenever we hear of a clergyman celebrated as a popular preacher, he is almost certain on inquiry to prove a Calvinist. The Calvinists have indeed done much to redeem the character of the English pulpit, degraded as it was by the miserable, lifeless, worn-out, Goody-two-shoes comparisons of virtue and vice of the last century, which make one long to praise vice at virtue's expense. They have at least laid the foundation for a better order of things; they have knowledge of Scripture and piety; they want, with some brilliant exceptions, literature and philosophy, and perhaps courage. Yet Robert Hall left little to be desired. Nothing in its kind can be more beautiful than his observations on humility:—"The devout man loves to lie low at the footstool of his Creator, because it is then he attains the most lively perceptions of the divine excellence, and the most tranquil confidence in the divine favour. In

so august a presence he sees all distinctions lost, and all beings reduced to the same level. He looks on his superiors without envy and on his inferiors without contempt, and when from this elevation he descends to mix in society, the conviction of superiority, which must in many instances be felt, is a calm inference of the understanding, and no longer a busy, importunate passion of the heart." In this exquisite passage we hardly know what most to admire, the pure devotion of the thoughts, the eloquent propriety of the language, or the rich and flowing melody of the periods; and why will not the Calvinists believe that religion, clothed with eloquence and philosophy, will, to use the words of Sir Philip Sidney in his unanswerable "Defence of Poesy," "more constantly inhabit both the memory and the judgment?" If men are to be moved by empty wordiness, ignorance, and childish sophistry, such as we often hear from the pulpit, why is the Bible so full of poetry and pathos, pregnant aphorism and nervous argument? It would be absurd to blame the Calvinistic preachers for not possessing the powers of Robert Hall; but they do deserve to be blamed for neglecting intellectual culture, and not making the best use of the powers they have.

As religious people have commonly a much greater horror of shocking the true believers,

armed, as they often are to the teeth, with prejudices of all kinds, than of disgusting worldly men, and thereby deterring them from becoming religious, so the Calvinistic preachers seem to think very little of the effect their discourses may have on those who are not of their own flock. They will not see that their random assertions, truisms and fallacies are highly injurious to the cause of truth. What intolerable stuff have we not heard uttered respecting the ancient philosophers by men who probably never read a line of them; what impossible effects attributed to Christianity, what extravagant exaggerations of Paganism! Rubbish of this sort seems to form the staple of most speeches at Bible meetings. To sum up the whole matter in plain phrase, if men would be useful they must first learn to speak the truth. "Whatsoever," says Hooker with his habitual wisdom, "is spoken of God or things appertaining to God otherwise than as the truth is: though it seem an honour, it is an injury."

Yet many of the offensive peculiarities of the modern Calvinists arise from well-founded fears. Let us not run into the contrary extreme, and try to compound between God and mammon. This is the rock on which millions have split, the insolent and audacious experiment we are almost all of us trying, as if our object was to see who could sail

nearest the wind. It is impossible to draw a broad line between the pale boundaries of right and wrong which will equally suit all circumstances; the best test, perhaps, of conversion, of real religion, is an habitual reference to the Deity in all we think and in all we do. An habitual reference it must be to have any effectual influence on the character, for, in proportion as it becomes more feeble and less constant, do men fall off from Christianity. It is only by thus living mentally in the presence of the Almighty that a reflecting man can become resigned to his will, the last and most difficult conquest over itself of an inquiring mind.

Among the deficiencies of our age, which are little likely to be supplied, may be numbered a good commentary on the Bible. It is not that there is any scarcity of pious and learned commentators; on the contrary, there is no end of them; but they all labour under the same defect, want of imagination and want of knowledge of mankind. Lord Bacon in his beautiful "Wisdom of the Ancients," so admirably translated by Sir Arthur Gorges, has given a meaning to the most extravagant fables of the Greeks, in many instances probably never suspected by the inventors themselves.

Though a scriptural commentary, conceived in a spirit equally fanciful, would be exceedingly dangerous, it must be remembered that we are

not likely to attribute too much meaning to the Bible. From its very nature, there can be in it nothing redundant and nothing deficient; not only, therefore, must something profound lie hid under the many passages in which hitherto no peculiar import has been discovered, and in the many others distinguished by their obscurity; but we have every reason to believe that we have not even approached to an exhaustion of the meaning of those passages which are known to contain "more than meets the ear." At the same time the obvious and peculiar necessity for judgment and caution must not be for a moment forgotten, a reflection which has, doubtless, in many instances, shortened the excursions of the more enterprising from the beaten track. The Bible is the history of the redemption of the world by the death of Christ; and though every thing else seems subservient to the unity of this grand design, never lost sight of from the first book to the last, it is, we should remember, the work of an infinite being, and must therefore be susceptible of infinite interpretation. To give an instance, there appears at first sight nothing peculiarly striking or uncommon in the story of Hagar. The expulsion of a female slave from the Harem, at the instigation of her offended mistress, can be no rare occurrence in the East; yet St. Paul expressly declares that these "things are an allegory;" the

bond-maid and the free-woman are types of the two covenants, of works and of grace. Again, Lord Bacon thus explains our Saviour's words, "Ye do err, not knowing the Scriptures nor the power of God;" "teaching that there are but two fountains of heresy; not knowing the will of God revealed in the Scriptures, and not knowing the power of God revealed, or at least made sensible in his creatures." In the same manner a spiritual and moral meaning may be extracted from every story or maxim in the Bible, and ample scope afforded for the display of ingenuity and fancy, hitherto almost shut out from religious discussions. Such a mode of scriptural exposition could not fail in able hands of arresting attention, not merely from its novelty, but from that unconquerable love of apologue, which has never yet deserted, and we are persuaded never will desert mankind.

In the pulpit the introduction of a more fanciful and lively style of preaching would surely succeed. Why should not religion avail herself of every weapon? Is it not something to get the ear of a congregation? It is natural that clergymen should impute the listlessness of many who hear them to any cause rather than their own dulness; but whether it be exclusively owing to the depravity of human nature or not, certain it is men will not listen with profound attention week after week to

discourses which tell them nothing they do not already know.

The knowledge of human nature, exhibited by scriptural commentators, is generally too coarse to be accurate. An inexhaustible theme for fine and subtle remark is not to be dismissed with a string of truisms from which time has long since stripped all the gloss. Besides, too many write rather what they suppose they ought to think than what they do think. Works of this sort are easily discoverable, and never readable. Analysis of character when candid, and not exaggerated or one-sided, is always interesting. The Bible abounds with portraits slightly sketched, which, if accurately and fairly worked out, would solve many difficulties; and though this has been often attempted, it has been done for the most part without freedom, with little previous acquaintance with great historical characters, and little knowledge of the world.

The liturgy of the Church of England is among the sublimest, the most pathetic, and the most appropriate to its object of all human compositions. When we consider the slight alterations necessary to render it consistent with itself, more free from repetitions, and conformable to Scripture and the Articles, it seems for a moment surprising that they have never been made. To some the divisions of opinion among the clergy themselves, their natural

disinclination to all change, and more especially to liturgical or doctrinal change, may be sufficient reasons why this has not been done, though nothing remained behind. But when we look at the constitution of the Church of England, particularly as it has been left by the disuse of convocations, we do not perceive that it has within itself any mode of effecting internal reforms. Whatever changes are made in the church must come from without, and perhaps it is better that it should be so, yet the practical difficulties either way are great. If the liturgy is to be revised, is it to be done publicly by a large assembly, or privately by a few individuals? And whether the revisers be few or many, how are they to be appointed, from what class are they to be taken, clergy or laity, either or both, and how far are their powers to extend? The difficulty of answering these questions would appear to make the prospect of change exceedingly remote, were there not an extensive and deep-rooted schism in the church itself, dividing nearly the whole body of the clergy into two distinct classes, hitherto receding from, rather than approximating to, each other, but at present manifesting some inclination to combine their forces in the common cause of ecclesiastical privilege.

Among the many subjects on which these two parties entertain conflicting opinions is that of

baptism. The Arminians, supported by the baptismal service, maintain that baptism and regeneration are synchronous ; which the Calvinists, leaning on the Article on baptism, altogether deny. Both parties appeal to Scripture, but the Arminians with less confidence than the Calvinists, and with a certain popish and learned hankering after the Fathers, whose works they seem to look upon as a sort of intermediate stage between the inspired writings and those of ordinary men. We can afford to smile, at the present day, at the would-be popish extravagances of the Oxford schismatics, and at the impotent fury with which the high-churchmen strive to run counter to the opinions and feelings of their times ; but it may be interesting to see, whether Tillotson's unanswerable argument against transubstantiation does not equally apply to their doctrine of baptismal regeneration ; thus shewing, by the way, how hard it is for men to be reasonable, in whose heads their own imaginary orthodoxy is the most prominent idea.

Tillotson argues against transubstantiation as an assumed miracle, contradicted by the evidence of our senses, which satisfy us that no change takes place in the wafer on consecration. Either then we must admit a miracle against the evidence of our senses, the only avenues of our knowledge, an admission which must reduce a reflecting and con-

sistent mind to utter scepticism, or transubstantiation becomes a mere word without an idea attached to it, a sound without a meaning. How will the Arminians extricate their doctrine of baptismal regeneration from the same dilemma! If they assert that regeneration uniformly accompanies baptism, they are contradicted by facts, which abundantly prove, that many who have been baptised have afterwards lived profligate lives, and died avowed infidels. If a man may be regenerate without being a Christian even in name, then regeneration, the absence of which, Christ himself has declared, in the most express terms language admits of, excludes a man from the kingdom of heaven, is in Arminian mouths a mere pleonasm, signifying nothing. Should the Arminians say, that their doctrine of baptismal regeneration would be sufficiently proved by the fact of persons baptised having at any subsequent period lived the lives of Christians; it is obviously incumbent upon them to shew, that all persons baptised, without one exception, have at some period lived such a life, which, of course, they cannot do, nor would the explanation even then be satisfactory.

The want of a good system of ecclesiastical discipline has long been felt by the real friends of the Church of England. As the attention of the legislature has been already directed to the subject, it

is to be hoped, this crying evil, certainly one of the main causes of dissent, will speedily be remedied.

The various psalms and hymns used in our churches are unworthy to be placed for a moment by the side of the liturgy. A few only of the best are much above mediocrity, and the great majority far below it. There seems to be no reason, why it should be harder to write good devotional poetry than good devotional prose. In fact, it has been done in the case of the Latin leonine hymns of the Roman Catholics. The “*Dies iræ*” and the “*Stabat Mater*”* are hardly inferior to the “*Te Deum*.” Some years since an excellent article on the subject of psalmody was published in the *Quarterly Review*, in which the requisites of a hymn were laid down with great accuracy and discriminating taste, yet there has been no improvement. The finest and the safest hymns will undoubtedly be those couched almost exclusively in scriptural phraseology ; but the

* The *Stabat Mater* has been recently very well translated in *Fraser’s Magazine*. How touching and simple is the stanza :

“ *Eia Mater ! fons amoris !*

Me sentire vim doloris

Fac, ut tecum lugeam ;

Fac ut ardeat cor meum

In amando Christum Deum,

Ut illi complaceam !”

peculiar intractability of the Hebrew poetry renders it impossible to select any single passage, and follow it closely in English verse. If Milton failed, who can hope to succeed? But this difficulty might perhaps be obviated by making hymns, not metrical translations, or even paraphrases of insulated passages, but rather centos from the Bible generally, compilations of scriptural thoughts, scriptural images, and scriptural phrases, selected at pleasure. At all events, the experiment, as far as I know, has never hitherto been fairly tried.

The question of the observance of the Sabbath has recently engaged much attention in the religious world, and many legislative attempts have been made to enforce it, some of them of the most preposterous description. All that the legislature can do in such a case is to compel men to preserve a decent exterior; it cannot make them pious, and all legislative enactments on such a subject must necessarily and unavoidably affect the poor much more sensibly than the rich. In England there really is a strong and deep-rooted religious feeling among a large proportion of the population, or at all events infidelity is generally looked upon with disgust and abhorrence; consequently, the question of Sabbath legislation has been met with great cowardice by many public men, through fear of seeming or of being called infidels. We have reached this point:

there is a most marked distinction, as all foreigners bear witness, between the Sabbath and the other days of the week; severer laws on the subject would be positively mischievous, if they proceeded so far as to be daily evaded or infringed by thousands in the present state of the public mind. The government of this country is the strongest in the world, but it will not long remain so, if collisions with the masses are sought rather than shunned, and laws enacted which cannot be executed. In the present instance it has not been proved that severer laws would do good.

How far divine laws require the observance of the Sabbath to be extended is a very different question from that of the propriety of further Sabbath legislation; and, perhaps, rather a matter of feeling than argument. To a devout man, what many would term puritanical austerity on this head is not a task; he has no taste for secular amusements at such a time; he abandons them not only without an effort, but it requires an effort on his part to descend to their insipid level, after being engaged in the most interesting and important of all contemplations. Hence, the manner in which a man prefers spending the Sabbath is an excellent test of his religious state. The mind, certainly, must be unbent, and may be unbent in a suitable manner; but a desire to plunge so rapidly from one extreme to

the other, if indeed there be an extreme at all, and religion has actually for a short space occupied the thoughts, shews a diseased understanding, and it is to be feared a depraved heart.

The observance of the Sabbath is a positive command : to make no distinction between that day and other days is clearly a breach of that command ; but what distinction do they make, who spend it in travelling, writing letters, looking over accounts, or similar employments ? The truth is, religion is irksome to them, and they are glad to escape from its irksomeness by wilful disobedience.

Though the question whether dissent be an evil is as old as Protestantism, or rather as Christianity itself, it seems to be one on which mankind are as far as ever from agreeing. The high-church Arminian, after denouncing the doctrines of his own articles and homilies in one sentence, condemns all who dissent from them in the next, though among those very dissenters he is himself to be numbered on his own shewing. He charges dissent with producing all manner of evils, which, as a little reflection might have taught him, spring not so much from dissent as from the nature of man, from the melancholy fact that men will not think charitably of those who differ from them in opinion. As Plato remarks in a singularly scriptural sentence, "Contentions, and wars, and battles spring from nothing

else than the body and the lusts thereof." * But the high-churchman's hatred of dissent is derived from a lower source than hatred of doctrines believed by the hater to be false and pernicious. He looks upon the church as his property, and dissenters as spiritual poachers and trespassers on the ecclesiastical manor. He cares not for the grounds of dissent; indeed if he were to be asked what peculiar opinions held by the majority of protestant dissenters he thought mischievous, and why he so thought them, he could not readily give a satisfactory answer; it is the audacity of the act of dissent that excites his wrath. This is the old leaven of Popery, the spirit of the rack, the brazier, and the auto da fé. On the other hand, the charges against the dissenters are not without foundation; many among them are not slow to repay harshness and injustice with malice and envy, to exaggerate real grievances, and invent others.

If this picture be accurate, it will be said, can any man doubt that dissent is an evil? There could be no doubt, if it could be shewn that assent is not an evil also. Neither dissent nor assent are necessary evils; the sinfulness of either must depend upon their respective motives; both have their temptations; and as hatred and strife are often incident to

* "Καὶ γὰρ πολέμους καὶ στάσεις καὶ μάχας οὐδεν ἄλλο παρέχει ἢ τὸ σῶμα καὶ αἱ τοῦτου ἐπιθυμίαι." Phædon.

dissent, so is indifference often incident to assent. A variety of sects is in many points beneficial to religion. As the members of each are severe critics of the doctrine and practice of all the rest, a species of mutual responsibility is created, by which all, though it is a truth few are willing to own, are in some degree controlled. Many excesses are prevented by the dread of active malevolence and honest indignation, strengthened by the spirit of religious partisanship. Sectarianism has done for Protestantism what monasticism did for Popery, it has kept it alive.

The church of Rome early discovered that religious zeal soon wore out, the languishing flame constantly required fresh fuel; if one age was ascetic and superstitious, the next was lukewarm and licentious; the policy of the popes, therefore, always encouraged the formation of monastic orders. St. Francis and St. Dominic were the Whitfield and Wesley of their times. Monasticism made Popery more comprehensive and elastic; the fervour, the self-denial, and the energy of the founders of the various orders, gave it a hold upon the affections of the multitude, which the Church of England at least has never yet been able to obtain.

Whether Protestants have done right in utterly condemning monasticism "may admit of doubt." The vow, indeed, is altogether bad. Such is human

nature, that we feel an irrepressible desire to escape from any prison, whether moral or physical, whether our imprisonment be our own act, or that of others. To have taken a vow is enough to make us long to violate it. This the Reformers saw; and the world was then rife with stories, true or false, — but as all felt who knew their own hearts, never improbable, — of enormities perpetrated beneath the irrevocable gloom of the cloister. But why can we not have monasticism without vows, monasticism, temporary or lasting, according to the inclination of the recluse? “This world is too much with us,” cares and pleasures make us offend in our hearts, and society makes us offend in our tongues. Surely religious houses, where men and women might retire separately for a time, live on simple fare, and devote themselves to contemplation, works of charity and prayer, would have a beneficial effect on mankind. The notion that austerities are meritorious, one of the worst evils of popish monasticism, would not exist in such institutions, as austerities would not exist themselves. The great obstacle to such a scheme would in this country be found in the artificial distinctions of society. In northern climates generally, and especially in England, the line between the rich and poor is too broad to admit of an harmonious social union under any circumstances. Their tastes, habits, sympathies, are all distinct; the

outward man differs much, the inward still more. On the other hand, to have separate establishments would be invidious, and look as if we expected to find gradations of rank, riches, talents, and acquirements, even in the next world; yet this, it should seem, would be in England the unavoidable alternative. Monasticism has always prevailed most in the south, for there the rich and poor readily amalgamate; the peasantry have an aptness for imitation, a native taste, and a nobility of aspect which soon places them on a level, and frequently on more than a level, with their superiors in station, who are indeed far from equalling the corresponding class in this country. If the principe Doria marries a Roman contadina, she is as complete a principessa in mind and manner in a fortnight as if she had been born one, though she may not be able even to read. Thus the facilities for monasticism are natural; poverty requires less self-denial and wears a less sordid air, and wealth does not stand on so lofty a pedestal.

In England the social obstacles to monasticism are hardly to be overcome, but the common objection, that it is a selfish desertion of our post, does not seem to apply to a state of religious seclusion without the vow. And what post after all have many to desert! The family man, the man of large landed property, the statesman, the active profes-

sional man, all have their respective paths chalked out for them ; but how many are there not included under any of these heads ? If such were to retire from the world, would the world miss them ? Alas no ! In the selfish whirl of modern society the purest and the mightiest minds are when they sink down but as wounded soldiers in a disastrous retreat, the crowd rushes on and forgets them. It is, indeed, now in more senses than Sir Thomas Browne intended, “too late to be ambitious.” Let us not, as some perchance have done, puffed up with vain-glory, led away by dreams of fancied usefulness, measuring ourselves not by the just dimensions of our meridian shadows, but by the deceitful lengthenings of the world’s evening sun, neglect the great purpose of our habitation in our earthly tabernacle, the salvation of our own souls. Things here are to be accounted evil or good, so far only as they unfit or prepare us to meet that day, which shall make “pyramids pillars of snow, and all that’s past a moment.” *

* Hydriotaphia.

OF POETRY.

“ Not empire to the rising sun,
 By valour, conduct, fortune won ;
 Not highest wisdom in debates,
 For framing laws to govern states ;
 Not skill in sciences profound,
 So large to grasp the circle round ;
 Such heavenly influence require,
 As how to strike the Muse’s lyre.”

Swift.

THERE seems little foundation for the complaint we sometimes hear made, that the present is not a poetical age. It would be a strange anomaly in the history of mankind, if it were the fact, that an age, so full of experiment, so fertile in every species of moral phenomena, throwing light over so many of the darker mysteries of our nature, had produced no one capable of presenting its character to posterity in the most permanent and magnificent form. The truth is there are poets ; but whether it be that the public taste naturally oscillates from admiration to neglect, or that the realities of life are become more interesting, strange and various, there never

was a period when poets found more difficulty in obtaining a hearing. Another serious obstacle to the progress of the privileged few is the innumerable host of pretenders, who choke up all the avenues to the public ear. To notice these would be a trial of temper and a waste of time, but if we consider what poetry really is, and measure some of our poets by a fair standard, we shall find that there have been, and still are those among us who will endure the test.

Poetry seems to be the art of clothing sublime and beautiful ideas in figurative and impassioned language metrically arranged. If in this definition the word rhythmically were substituted for metrically, there would be no sufficient distinction between poetry and prose, since there is rhythm or melody in the periods of all fine prose writers. It will include the parallelism of the Hebrews, which may surely be considered a species of metre. It will also include pathos, because pathos is beautiful, though poetical only so far as it is beautiful, as it may trench upon what the Greeks called "the hateful," which excites disgust; or the misery described may be so overwhelming as to excite anguish; in either case the bounds of poetry are passed, for in the depth of beauty there is ever a principle of repose. Thus Æschylus, not less philosophically than poetically, calls Helen "the

spirit of a breathless calm." * Again, Shakspeare has been sometimes blamed for not terminating his tragedy of Romeo and Juliet according to the version of the story by Luigi da Porto and Bandello, who make Juliet awake after Romeo has poisoned himself, and before he dies. Now whether Shakspeare had read this version or not, a man who has studied the character of his mind will hardly believe that so obvious a conclusion did not suggest itself to him, but, as I once heard a German remark, such a scene would have been "*trop déchirant*," the ideal would have been lost in the natural.

The Germans, during the latter half of the last century, broke up new ground in literature; the impulse they gave to the mind naturally communicated itself first to the English, as the people who in character and language most resembled them, and latterly, within the last few years, to the French and Italians. The old vein was indeed everywhere exhausted; the Germans have the merit of priority in point of time, and also of invention, as they had a literature to create, but they did but what the English, in a great measure at least, would have done, had the former delayed much longer. English writers began in fact to revert to their ancient models long before German literature was extensively known in this country; but though few were

* "*Φρόνημα νηνέμου γαλάνας.*" Agamemnon.

aware of it, the influence of Germany was felt notwithstanding. To this influence, combined with the natural tendency of mankind to run from one extreme to another, from the depth of the definite to the height of the ideal, many of our faults, as well as of our excellences, must be attributed. From these two causes spring our besetting sins of sentimentality, vagueness, transcendentalism, and affectation; our worst literary feature, writing without thought, and without taking pains, seems chargeable upon the bad habit we have got into of being always in a hurry.

The most difficult task of a poet is to unite the ideal and the definite in just proportions, so that one shall not swallow up the other. Goethe may be said to have entirely succeeded in amalgamating these discordant elements in the first part of *Faust*; but as the bent of his mind was to soar too high, in two others of his best works, *Iphigenia* and *Tasso*, he seems to have been compelled to tie himself down to the simple forms of the Greeks.

Though the subject of this chapter is English poetry, it will not be inconsistent with the design, for reasons which will presently appear, to say a few words on the first part of *Faust*, the most remarkable work of the most remarkable man of our times.

If we compare Goethe with Shakspeare, and there are few who can endure such a comparison better,

there appears to be this, among other essential distinctions between them, that Shakspeare is the poet of all countries and of all times, "broad and general as the casing air," he incloses universal humanity within his mantle; Goethe, though comprehensive and various, is more peculiarly the poet of his age, and in this his master-piece he has drawn a portrait of his age, its philosophy, literature, hopes, fears, and desires, never equalled in breadth and truth. Faust is not, nor was intended to be, a man of the fifteenth century. Some critics have blamed the want of individuality in his character, not understanding the author's design. It is just as reasonable to blame De Foe for the want of individuality in the character of Crusoe. Faust is an aggregate of the men of the author's age, but not of common men, and here lies the difficulty of comprehending him; the profoundness of his thoughts, and the magnificent harmony of his language, belong alone to Goethe. He would "see, suffer, and enjoy," much more than this world can afford, though he is sensible that it will end in his being "tired of it all."* Of whatever the world can afford he is tired already; hence the sweeping emphasis of his curse,

"So fluch' ich Alles was die Seele

Mit Lock und Gaukelwerk umspannt," u. s. w.

* History of Rome. Lardner's Cab. Cycl.

and the almost insane wildness of his desires,

“ Dem Taumel weih’ ich mich, der schmerlichsten Genuss,
Verliebttem Hass, erquickendem Verdruss,” u. s. w.

still he is human ; how beautifully are we convinced of his participation in our common nature, when he puts down the poisoned cup on hearing the paschal song, and reverts to the associations of his childhood in these exquisite lines,

“ Diess Lied verkündete der Jugend muntre Spiele,
Der Frühlingsfeyer freyes Glück,
Erinnrung hält mich nun mit kindlichem Gefühle
Vom letzten, ernsten Schritt zurück :
O tönet fort, ihr süssen Himmelslieder,
Die Thräne quillt, die Erde hat mich wieder.”

Faust, distracted by the want of harmony between his capacity and his desires, descends to the common level of mankind ; hence the episode of Margaret, for, notwithstanding the marvellous beauty and pathos of the execution, it is but an episode, and only so far furthers the author’s design, as it tends to develop the character of Faust more completely. Earlier in his history, to shew that his object is not so much to know as to feel, he is contrasted with the mere bookworm Wagner, “ nur des einen Triebs bewusst.”

For the sake of relief and variety, the scenes of “Auerbach’s Keller” and the “Spaziergang” are in-

troduced, displaying the accuracy of Goethe's observation, and his general knowledge of mankind.

The magic of Faust, though very good, and forming a necessary part of the poem, is not altogether satisfactory; but the character of Mephistophiles is incomparable. He is the best, or rather the solitary portrait of the Devil. His lip curls with an eternal sneer; one would think Goethe must have had certain fiendish philosophers in his eye. How finely and naturally does the innocent Margaret recoil from him, with what unconscious profoundness does she exclaim,

“ Es steht ihm an der Stirn geschrieben,
Das er nicht mag eine Seele lieben.”

In one solitary instance Mephistophiles bursts into an eloquent rhapsody, which seems foreign to his character,

“ Wenn sich der Mensch, die kleine Narrenwelt
Gewöhnlich für ein Ganzes hält,
Ich bin ein Theil des Theils der Anfangs Alles war,
Ein Theil der Finsterniss, die sich das Licht gebar.”

However, if he is to be eloquent at all, it cannot be denied that his eloquence is most appropriately employed in vaunting himself.

Faust is imperfect, necessarily imperfect, and that from the nature of the subject, and not from any defect in the author. To complete it, would require faculties men do not possess, and cannot compre-

hend. But we sympathise with Faust, because we feel that his presumption and his weakness are our own. The moral, for there is a moral, may be given by slightly varying the fine and well-known adage of Scaliger, *Virtutis humanæ magna pars est, quædam æquo animo sentire nolle.**

Of the second part of Faust, I am not at present qualified to give an opinion.

The germ of the abominable violations of sense and propriety by the modern French romantic school is to be found in Faust. But Goethe was a consummate artist, who understood and followed, in this instance at least, simple truth and tranquil beauty; the French romanticists have only woven together a sickly fantastic tissue of horrors and crimes.

John Paul Richter is reported to have said that "the empire of the Germans was the air;" thus indirectly confessing the justice of the charge of mysticism, long ago brought against them by plain people, and mystically rebutted by Mr. Carlyle. They seem to take as much pains to wrap up their thoughts in an uncouth garb as the ancient Egyptians did their mummies; and after all the unwrapping and unfolding is over, they are sometimes found to be nearly as old. Their perverseness in refusing to say a common thing in a common way,

* "*Sapientiæ humanæ magna pars est, quædam æquo animo nescire velle.*"

is as provoking as the unsuccessful obstinacy of some of our English poets in attempting to illustrate the feelings ; an exotic style, also imported from Germany, though considerably modified and improved by the study of our own early writers.

Of the poets of the feelings the chief is Wordsworth. His friends, Coleridge and Southey, touch upon the same ground, but only incidentally, and their merits and defects are in many respects very unlike his. The term Lakists therefore applied to all three is incorrect, as they differ materially, and Wordsworth alone among them is the founder of a school. Neither can Wordsworth be called a metaphysical poet, for he treats of the feelings only, and not of the intellectual faculties. The intolerant idolatry of his disciples would tempt one to speak of him with more harshness than he deserves, for though not without obligations to others, he is unquestionably a man of original mind. But he thinks too much of himself to love truth with all his heart. Thus having published poems of a peculiar character, he could not leave them, as a high-minded man would have done, to their fate, satisfied that in time they would be appreciated as they deserved, but he must argue the public into admiration in prose ; he must endeavour to shew that his poems, whether admired or not, ought to be so ; and he must give a theory of poetry based on the defects of his own

mind, and condemning what possibly he found it easier to condemn than to imitate.

Mr. Wordsworth tells us that his object is to write in "language really used by men;" it would seem on the antiquary's principle, when he recommended Lovel to write in blank verse, as being the easiest. He denounces poetic diction, by which he chooses to understand, not the language of imagination and fancy, but the conventional tinsel of third or fourth rate versifiers. Now we maintain, let the Wordsworthians prove the contrary if they can, that there is not and cannot be good poetry in "language really used by men," excepting on very rare and extraordinary occasions. Naked nature is intolerable, and by a great artist is invariably idealised. A more favourable authority for Mr. Wordsworth's position cannot be quoted than the wonderful passage in *Lear*, beginning

" I am a very foolish, fond old man,
Fourscore and upward, and, to deal plainly,
I fear I am not in my perfect mind."

It would appear at first sight that this is the language of common life, but it is only apparently so. A man in the situation of *Lear*, though he might have been touching, would infallibly, like all madmen, have mingled the disgusting and the absurd with the pathetic. It is absolutely impossible that

he could have spoken with such exquisite propriety of character, adjusted to an ideal rather than a real standard. The same remark applies to the poetical passages of Scripture, of Homer, Chaucer, or any other great poet. Their simplicity is not nature, but above it.*

Mr. Wordsworth is not absolutely without pathos, but his pathos is only in part what he intended it should be; it is exclusively of the contemplative kind, in the higher and passionate kind he has egregiously failed. He must be a man of many tears, “*πολυδάκρυτος ἀνὴρ*,” who could weep at his description of the death of Francis Norton—

“ He from a soldier’s hand had snatched
A spear,—and with his eyes he watched
Their motions, turning round and round :—
His weaker hand the banner held ;
And straight, by savage zeal impelled,
Forth rushed a pikeman; as if he,
Not without harsh indignity
Would seize the same — instinctively
To smite the offender—with his lance
Did Francis from the brake advance ;
But, from behind, a treacherous wound †
Unfeeling, brought him to the ground,

* Since writing this, I have seen the same thought in Coleridge’s Literary Remains.

† The expression “unfeeling wound” is obviously incorrect.

A mortal stroke : oh, grief to tell !
Thus, thus the noble Francis fell :
There did he lie of breath forsaken ;
The banner from his grasp was taken,
And borne exultingly away ;
And the body was left on the ground where it lay."

This is "the language really used by men" beyond all doubt. A witness at a coroner's inquest could not have told the story in a balder or tamer way, nor the parish bellman have versified it in more halting lines.

Of Wordsworth's contemplative or philosophical pathos, perhaps no better instance can be given than these two stanzas:

" My eyes are dim with childish tears,
My heart is idly stirred,
For the same sound is in my ears,
Which in those days I heard.

Thus fares it still in our decay,
And yet the wiser mind
Mourns less for what takes away,
Than what it leaves behind."

The first stanza is very beautiful, but not characteristic ; in the second a fine thought is but imperfectly expressed.

It will be found that Wordsworth seldom or never writes well without violating his own theory, and that when he writes best, the same subject has

been generally better treated by others. There is depth in his thoughts, but his powers of expression are, like his passions, feeble, he has neither fire nor energy, little inventive imagination, neither wit nor humour, and he fails in one of the most essential requisites of a poet, harmony of numbers. He is not remarkable for his knowledge of mankind, he has no "wise saws or modern instances," and he never can go on long without affectation, but his purity is great, and he has a thorough and genuine love of nature.

It is difficult to understand how a man who has written so much as Wordsworth should fail so frequently in expression and harmony of numbers, unless the reason be that he undervalues their importance. To elucidate this point fully would involve an inquiry into the nature of the pleasure produced by poetry, or, to go still deeper, by the contemplation of beauty in all its forms. This would be beside our present purpose, and necessarily occupy much time and thought. Suffice it to say that expression and harmony alone are beauty, and though perfect beauty be something more than either or both united, still without them it cannot exist. Mere poetical pleasure is seldom produced by the thought alone, often where the thought is valuable, the pleasure resulting from it is not poetical, but expression and harmony always give

poetical pleasure, though the thought be worthless.
To take an instance from Horace,

“ Plerumque gratae divitibus vices,
Mundæque parvo sub lare pauperum
Cœnæ, sine aulæis et ostro,
Solicitam explicuère frontem.”

What is the value of the thought here? What is the value of the thought in songs, even in those incomparable specimens which Shakspeare has scattered but too sparingly through his dramas, or in the inferior but still very beautiful lyrics of Beaumont and Fletcher and Shelley? We cannot forbear giving one instance, taken at random from the best of modern song-writers, Goethe; it seems perfect, but there is little thought in it.

NACHTGESANG.

“ O gib vom weichen Pfühle
Traümend ein halb Gehör,
Bei meinem Saitenspiele
Schlafe! was willst du mehr?

Bei meinem Saitenspiele
Segnet der Sterne Heer
Die ewigen Gefühle;
Schlafe! was willst du mehr?

Die ewigen Gefühle
Heben mich hoch und hehr
Aus irdischem Gewühle:
Schlafe! was willst du mehr?

Vom irdischen Gewühle
 Trennst du mich nur zu sehr,
 Bannst mich in diese Kühle;
 Schlafe! was willst du mehr?
 Bannst mich in diese Kühle,
 Gibst nur im Traum Gehör,
 Ach auf dem weichen Pfühle
 Schlafe! was willst du mehr."

The labour of a week would not be ill bestowed in translating this charming trifle, though the only thought in it is lent to, or borrowed from, two lines in *Faust*,

"Die uns das Leben gaben herrliche Gefühle
 Erstarren in dem irdischen Gewühle."

But is it therefore the less beautiful?

An exquisite collection of poems from different languages might be made on the subject of sleep alone, there would be great variety of imagery, great sweetness of versification in them, but very few ideas.

The affectation of Wordsworth chiefly consists in his exalting common things, not occasionally like other poets, but studiously and systematically. The genuine artist speaking of a poet says,

"Oft adelt er was uns gemein erschien,
 Und das Geschätzte wird für ihm zu nichts."

But this happens often only, not always. Wordsworth puts the same thought thus,

“ To me the meanest flower that blows can give
Thoughts that do often lie too deep for tears.”

Unlike Goethe, however, he has fairly hunted it down ; his taste did not tell him where to stop, and thus he pesters us to death with his eternal daisies, scrubby thorns, idiots and pedlars. Such subjects may sometimes excite philosophical and poetical trains in the mind, but to suppose that they must do so necessarily and always, is fantastic and absurd.

Wordsworth has succeeded in nothing so well as in his sonnets. They are among the best in the language, quite as good, if not better, than Milton's, and decidedly inferior only to Shakspeare's. In this species of poem, the most appropriate poetical vehicle for philosophical thought, the defects of his mind are less apparent. He cannot be so easily diffuse as in blank verse ; the sonnet does not require the ardour and energy of the lyric, and its harmony is peculiar, and flows naturally from the loftiness of the thought. How very beautiful are the first five lines of this sonnet ! The rest is scarcely so good, but no part of it is in the “ language really used by men.”

“ It is a beauteous evening, calm and free ;
The holy time is quiet as a nun
Breathless with adoration ; the broad sun
Is sinking down in its tranquillity ;
The gentleness of heaven is on the sea.”

There is nothing in inanimate nature so pathetic as the sea at sun-set in complete repose. No one, perhaps, has described it more finely than Shelley in his "Cloud."

" And when sun-set may breathe from the lit sea beneath
Its ardours of rest and of love,
And the crimson pall of eve may fall
From the depth of heaven above,
With wings folded I rest on mine airy nest
As still as a brooding dove."

In the following sonnet Wordsworth is, what he very rarely is, imaginative.

" Methought I saw the footsteps of a throne
Which mists and vapours from mine eyes did shroud —
Nor view of who might sit thereon allowed ;
But all the steps and ground about were strown
With sights the ruefullest that flesh and bone
Ever put on ; a miserable crowd,
Sick, hale, old, young, who cried before that cloud,
Thou art our king, O Death ! to thee we groan !
I seemed to mount those steps, the vapours gave
Smooth way ; and I beheld the face of one
Sleeping alone within a mossy cave,
With her face up to heaven ; that seemed to have
Pleasing remembrance of a thought foregone ;
A lovely Beauty in a summer grave."

This is also picturesque, but a sonnet of Tennyson's in the same stile is more nervous, and richer in diction —

“ The pallid thunderstricken * sigh for gain,
 Down an ideal stream they ever float,
 And sailing on Pactolus in a boat,
 Drown soul and sense, while wistfully they strain
 Weak eyes upon the glistening sands that robe
 The understream. The wise, could he behold
 Cathedralled caverns of thick-ribbed gold,
 And branching silvers of the central globe,
 Would marvel from so beautiful a sight
 How scorn and ruin, pain and hate could flow :
 But hatred in a gold cave sits below,
 Pleached with her hair in mail of argent light
 Shot into gold, a snake her forehead clips,
 And skins the colour from her trembling lips.”

I do not know any sonnets of Wordsworth superior to the two following ; others may, perhaps, find several they like better, for it is hard to determine the comparative merit of sonnets.

Composed upon Westminster Bridge.

“ Earth has not any thing to show more fair :
 Dull would he be of soul who could pass by
 A sight so touching in its majesty :
 The city now doth like a garment wear
 The beauty of the morning ; silent, bare,
 Ships, towers, domes, theatres and temples lie
 Open unto the fields and to the sky ;
 All bright and glittering in the smokeless air.
 Never did sun more beautifully steep
 In his first splendour valley, rock, or hill ;

* Why thunderstricken ?

Ne'er saw I, never felt a calm so deep !
 The river glideth at his own sweet will :
 Dear God ! the very houses seem asleep ;
 And all that mighty heart is lying still."

This is very true and noble ; nevertheless the twelfth line is affectedly worded, the expression " Dear God !" introduced to fill up the thirteenth line, is both affected and profane, but the last line is grand.

" A Parsonage in Oxfordshire.

Where holy ground begins, unhallowed ends,
 Is marked by no distinguishable line ;
 The turf unites, the pathways intertwine ;
 And, whereso'er the stealing footstep tends,
 Garden, and that domain where kindred, friends,
 And neighbours rest together, here confound
 Their several features, mingled like the sound
 Of many waters, or as evening blends
 With shady night. Soft airs, from shrub and flower,
 Waft fragrant greetings to each silent grave ;
 And while those lofty poplars gently wave
 Their tops, between them comes and goes a sky
 Bright as the glimpses of eternity,
 To saints accorded in their mortal hour."

The legitimate sonnet admits but of four rhymes, Wordsworth does not always grapple with its difficulties. Lord Byron wears its shackles with ease, in the beautiful sonnet to the Countess Guiccioli, but in powers of expression he surpassed

all our modern poets, excepting Shelley in his happier moments.

Wordsworth's conceited and affected sonnet to his own portrait is only worth alluding to for the sake of observing how gracefully Alfieri has avoided both faults in these two beautiful lines:—

“ Qualche cent' anni oltre il mio fral, poi fia
Ch' anche tu rieda al nulla, o imagin mia.”

Enough of sonnets, an unsatisfactory sort of poem after all. The song is a better test of the genuine poet.

The two odes on the “Recollections of Childhood,” and “On the Power of Sound,” are, perhaps, Wordsworth's best and most characteristic efforts. It may be interesting to compare the first with Schiller's *Ideale*, particularly as the advantage is not wholly on either side. The best, or at any rate the most faultless stanza in Wordsworth's ode is the first:—

“ There was a time when meadow, grove, and stream,
The earth, and every common sight,
To me did seem
Apparelled in celestial light,
The glory and the freshness of a dream.
It is not now as it hath been of yore ;
Turn wheresoe'er I may,
By night or day,
The things which I have seen I now can see no more.”

Schiller begins thus,—

“ So willst du treulos von mir scheiden,
 Mit deinen holden Phantasien,
 Mit deinen Schmerzen, deinen Freuden,
 Mit allen unerbittlich fliehen ?
 Kann nichts, dich, Fliehende, verweilen,
 O meines Lebens goldne Zeit !
 Vergebens ! deine Wellen eilen
 Hinab ins Meer der Ewigkeit ! ”

So far it is hard to say which has the advantage, for if the march of the German is more rapid and musical, that of the Englishman is more solemn and majestic. But as Wordsworth advances, his customary affectation, with its accompanying “ par-turient throes,” soon makes its appearance:—

“ Shout round me, let me hear thy shouts, thou happy shepherd boy ! ”

If any man can tolerate this line he has not a poetical ear: but want of melody is not its only fault. There is not the slightest reason for supposing shepherd boys to be happier than other boys, on the contrary, from living so much by themselves, they are probably duller and more stupid.

In hardihood of language, Wordsworth will bear no comparison with Schiller:—

“ So schlang ich mich mit Liebesarmen
 Um die Natur, mit Jugendlust,
 Bis sie zu athmen, zu erwarmen
 Begann an meiner Dichterbrust.”

Nor in sweetness,

“ Da lebte mir der Baum, die Rose,
 Mir sang der Quellen Silberfall,
 Es fühlte selbst das Seelenlose,
 Von meines Lebens Wiederhall.”

The Platonic notion,

“ Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting ,
 The soul that rises with us, our life's star,
 Hath had elsewhere its setting,
 And cometh from afar.”

is better put by Sir Thomas Browne, with a saving clause, omitted by the poet : —

“ Would truth dispense, we could be content with Plato that knowledge were but remembrance ; that intellectual acquisition were but reminiscential evocation, and new impressions but the colorishing of old stamps which stood pale in the soul before.”

Wordsworth, though inferior to Schiller in expression, is superior to him in depth of thought. He derives his consolation from the conviction of immortality, Schiller from friendship and occupation, an inadequate climax, hence the concluding stanzas of “ Die Ideale ” are somewhat poor, and disappoint the expectation ; but Wordsworth is always heavy, Schiller rushes on like his own mountain-torrent,

“ Ein Regenstrom aus Felsenrissen.”

The ode “ On the Power of Sound ” is quite as

good as that "On the Recollections of Childhood." It has the same merits and the same defects, the same affectation, want of melody, powerless expression, and depth of thought. Here the "happy milk maids" enact the part of the "happy shepherd boy." These lines are musical to a degree very uncommon with Wordsworth:—

" For the tired slave, song lifts the languid oar,
And bids it aptly fall, with chime
That beautifies the fairest shore,
And mitigates the harshest clime."

In the following passage the three last lines, the least characteristic, are the best:—

" For terror, joy, or pity,
Vast is the compass and the swell of notes :
From the babe's first cry to voice of regal city,
Rolling a solemn sea-like bass, that floats
Far as the woodlands ; with the trill to blend
Of that shy songstress, whose love-tale
Might tempt an angel to descend,
While hovering o'er the moonlight vale."

The two first lines are not remarkable; the third would not have been written by a man with a poetical ear; the voice of the city floating far as the woodlands is an inaccurate expression, because it implies that woods are an invariable appendage to a city: the three last lines are beautiful, but Coleridge

has some verses far more picturesque and imaginative on a subject nearly similar : —

“ But oh, that deep, romantic chasm which slanted
 Down the green hill, athwart a cedarn cover !
 A savage place, as holy and enchanted
 As e’er beneath the waning moon was haunted
 By woman wailing for her demon lover !”

The noblest stanza in Wordsworth’s ode is the twelfth : —

“ By one pervading Spirit
 Of tones and numbers all things are controlled,
 As sages taught, where faith was found to merit
 Initiation in that mystery old.
 The heavens, whose aspect makes our minds as still
 As they themselves *appear* to be,
 Innumerable voices fill
 With everlasting harmony ;
 The towering headlands, crowned with mist,
 Their feet among the billows, know
 That ocean is a mighty harmonist ;
 Thy pinions, universal air,
 Ever waving to and fro,
 Are delegates of harmony, and bear
 Strains that support the Seasons in their round ;
 Stern Winter loves a dirge-like sound.”

“ Si sic omnia !” Yet Goethe has given all this and more in seven glorious lines : —

“ Wie Alles sich zum Ganzen webt !
 Eins in dem Andern wirkt und lebt.

Wie Himmelskräfte auf und nieder steigen,
 Und sich die goldnen Eimer reichen !
 Mit segenduftenden Schwingen
 Vom Himmel durch die Erde dringen,
 Harmonisch all' des All durchklingen !”

Wordsworth's "Laodamia" has been much admired. It is elegant, pure, and somewhat feeble, as any one may satisfy himself who will take the trouble to compare the meeting of Protesilaus and Laodamia with that of Ulysses and his mother in the *Odyssey*, or the parallel passage in *Virgil*. Wordsworth can draw no tears. "Poetry," said Milton, "is simple, sensuous, passionate;" Wordsworth is certainly not the last, and his claim to the two first is very doubtful.

The "Excursion" is a long poem in blank verse, of that class which gods call philosophical, and men didactic; there are fine things in it, but as a whole it is exceedingly tiresome. As an instance of one of Wordsworth's most provoking faults take the opening of the third book:—

“ A humming bee, a little tinkling rill,
 A pair of falcons, wheeling on the wing,
 In clamorous agitation, round the crest
 Of a tall rock, their airy citadel ;
 By each and all of these the pensive ear
 Was greeted.”

This is no more poetry than an auctioneer's cata-

logue is poetry. Numbers of physical objects strung together, just as they may be seen any day by any man, do not constitute poetry, nor scarcely painting. To become poetical and picturesque they must be made to depend upon each other, not left disjointed and unconnected as they really are, or at least appear to be to human eyes, incapable of taking in at a glance more than an infinitesimal portion of the universe, but so arranged as to form parts of one harmonious whole. This is one of the first rules of art, which is ideal as well as imitative, and Wordsworth sins against it perpetually.

Among our early poets, Wordsworth most resembles Lord Brooke, Henry More, Chamberlayne, Sir John Davies, and Sir William Davenant, who all say fine things occasionally, and have considerable depth of thought, but want liveliness, ease, perspicuity, vigour, terseness, and harmony of numbers; consequently they are now known, and deserve to be known, only to the curious. Compare any of them with Spenser, or with Drayton's *Nymphidia* or *Eclogues*, or even with Herrick, Carew, or Lovelace, and how inferior is the poetical pleasure they produce! Among the moderns something of Wordsworth's cast of mind may be discovered in Akenside and Cowper. The poem on "The Pleasures of Imagination" is neither much more, nor much less,

heavy than the "Excursion;" the same thing may be said of Cowper's blank verse, but Cowper had exquisite humour, and spirit too sometimes, as in the fine lyric on the foundering of the Royal George.

In Chorley's Life of Mrs. Hemans, in an account of an interview between Wordsworth and the Poetess, it is said that the conversation happened to turn on Moore's nonsense in his Life of Byron, that great poets must make bad husbands. Wordsworth observed that the fault of such men was, not that they had too much genius, but too little, and dwelt with edifying complacency on his own domestic happiness. If he had thrown what was passing in his mind into a syllogism would it not have run thus?

The greatest poets are those who are happiest in their families :

I am happier in my family than Byron was ;

Therefore, I am a greater poet.

Wordsworth's own conceit and affectation, and the sectarian idolatry of his intolerant worshippers, have made him perhaps a worse poet than nature intended him to be. It may be said, Why not give him credit for what he has good, and keep the bad out of sight, since it is certain he will not mend? The answer is, that art must suffer, if the admira-

tion due only to excellence be frittered away on mediocrity, or if the strength of an original mind so far dazzle men's eyes as to make them suppose its faults merits. We forget, in our morbid craving for novelty, that it is not hard for men to be original who are careless of overstepping the truth and propriety of art.

When Mackintosh once found fault with Wordsworth's poetry, Coleridge said to him, "He travels on so far before you that he dwindles in the distance." This is only begging the question through the help of a splendid metaphor. Mackintosh had soul enough to admire Shakspeare, Homer, Dante, Milton, or any other imperial mind, why then should he not have admired Wordsworth, if he deserved it?

The poems of Coleridge have not been the subject of so much literary controversy as those of Wordsworth. They are too purely imaginative to be popular, but those who do admire them will not greatly differ as to their merits. There is a rich melody in the versification of Coleridge peculiar to himself, and his treatment of the supernatural is not less striking and original. The mysterious lady in *Christabelle* is altogether new. Some of the best supernatural ballads ever written were the productions of Coleridge's contemporaries; yet no one,

perhaps, has succeeded better than he has done in his *Ancient Mariner* and *Christabelle*, though the last is disfigured by affectation. Bürger's *Lenore*, Goethe's *Bride of Corinth*, Mery and Barthelemy's *Revue de Minuit*, are very different, both from each other and from the *Ancient Mariner* and *Christabelle*, yet all excellent in their kind. Bürger is the more definite and vigorous; the homely vividness of the scene, and the terse simplicity of the language, extort from us a deeper quasi-belief than any poetical ghost-story whatever. The *Bride of Corinth* is like a drama with a plot well-unfolded; stanza after stanza the interest accumulates upon us till we arrive at the prodigious catastrophe. All is told with a severity of style worthy of the best ages of Greece, nevertheless such a tale is no more a legitimate subject of art than the prologue in *Heaven in Faust*. The *Revue de Minuit* is the most picturesque of ghost-stories; the language seems too pure and terse for a translation, but the imaginative splendour and boldness of the fiction has rather a German than a French character.

Coleridge has allowed himself a far wider range. He touches the very verge of the fantastic, which yet he does not pass. The fine antique air which he has flung over these ballads, and the racy copiousness of his imagination, keep him clear of

the rock of "incredulus odi," the destruction of so many similar adventurers.

Many of Coleridge's minor poems, in particular *Genevieve*, are distinguished for great beauty and sweetness, but he has left behind him no monument worthy of his powers. Notwithstanding his fine preface to the *Encyclopædia Metropolitana*, and his beautiful and profound criticisms on Shakspeare, Cervantes and others, imagination, not reason, sate on his mental throne; he required a rigid dialectic discipline, instead of which he chose to bewilder himself in the labyrinth of transcendentalism, the worst place in the world for finding common sense.

Southey's contributions to literature are far more extensive than those of Wordsworth or Coleridge. His mind is not less peculiar than theirs. There is a strangely ferocious spirit occasionally apparent in his writings, the more anomalous from its juxtaposition with a very amiable character. He is a bitter controversialist; and in his charming *History of the Brazils* he dwells upon the subject of cannibalism with such evident *goût*, that one cannot help suspecting he would have been eminently distinguished for his feats in that line had he been born a savage. Nothing of the kind can be better done than his translations of the peninsular romances, the *Chronicle of the Cid*, *Amadis of Gaul*, and *Palmerin of England*. He has here given a

scriptural solemnity to his style, in accordance with the fine taste of Milton, who loved "the deeds of knighthood" told "in solemn cantos." He has trodden with success almost every walk of literature, as translator, editor, critic, biographer, historian and poet.

There are few of our modern poets who can be charged with having written too little, and Southey least of all. It is owing to this "*cacoethes scribendi*" that his poems, like those of most of his contemporaries, have a loose and disjointed air; they want point and terseness. His epics are ill-digested as a whole, and the execution of the details is often feeble and slovenly, but they abound with passages of rare beauty. Southey deserves to be numbered among those poets who have identified their style and feelings so completely with those of the age and country where their scene is laid, that their works might actually have been written by a native author, contemporary with the events narrated. *Kehama* has this merit in a more prominent, though it may be not in a greater degree, than any of Southey's poems, and for this among other reasons it is, perhaps, the best. *Kehama* is purely Hindoo, both in its excellencies and defects; it is throughout in keeping, excepting one strange and most unnecessary allusion to Niagara. The moral tone of this poem, as indeed of Southey

generally, is very pure and noble. Nothing purer, perhaps nothing finer, is to be found throughout the whole range of contemporary English poets, than the well-known lines beginning,

“ They sin who tell us love can die ;
With life all other passions fly,
All others are but vanity.”

Roderick has been more praised than any of Southey's epics, nevertheless we suspect there are not many who have read it through. The costume is probably quite as accurate as that of *Kehama*, for there can hardly be a man living so familiar with all that relates to the Spanish peninsula, from first to last, as Southey, but the scene and the actors are less remote and peculiar. The odd monastic turn of Southey's mind had ample scope for displaying itself in *Roderick*, an opportunity which it was not to be supposed he would neglect, and accordingly the cold and austere genius of the cloister casts a shadow over the entire poem.

Southey's most characteristic works are his Ballads. They are perfectly original, have much quaint humour, and are strongly impregnated with the monastic spirit. His devils are excellent ; not men in strange situations, but the real creatures of vulgar superstition, and therefore profound. These Ballads are not unequally written ; two, however, may be

mentioned as being quite as good, if not better, than any others. "The Old Woman of Berkeley," and "All for Love, or a Sinner well saved." The last is one of Southey's later productions, yet, though published some years, it has never, I believe, reached a second edition. "Proh pudor!"

It is much to be regretted that Southey has not written a history of monasticism, or at any rate of some of the leading monastic orders. Such a work is one of the greatest desiderata in historical literature; and when we consider Southey's prodigious learning, his delight in the subject, and the ease and elegance of his prose style, no man can soon be expected to arise equally qualified for the task. *

Shelley has some affinities with Wordsworth, Coleridge and Southey, but far more fancy than either of them, and a more striking resemblance to the writers of the age of Elizabeth and James. The shadowy and dreamy character of the greater part of his poems, his miserable philosophy, and his insane blasphemy, have greatly injured his poetical

* Whether "The Doctor" be written by Southey or not, let revealers of mysteries determine; it is certainly written by one who strongly resembles him, perhaps too strongly to be other than himself. Though unnecessarily marred by affectation, it is the book of a ripe scholar and a noble gentleman, full of beautiful thoughts and feelings, conveyed in a sweet and graceful style, the reflection of a pure and harmonious mind.

reputation. But if we neglect some three fourths of his writings, replete, nevertheless, with rarely beautiful images, and confine ourselves only to the remainder, Shelley is perhaps the sweetest, the richest, the loftiest, the most genuine English poet of his time. He should never have written any thing but lyrics and dramas. He required to be chained down to the earth, either by the delineation of actual life, as in the drama, or by a species of poem too short to allow him to lose himself in the clouds, as the lyric. The tragedy of the Cenci is one of the finest in the language, excepting those of Shakspeare alone, and the noblest poem which has been published in England since *Paradise Lost*. Loathsome as the subject is, deeply as it is to be regretted that such powers should have been so wasted, Shelley has treated it with, perhaps, as much delicacy as it was susceptible of, and for the most part avoided "the hateful" with great skill. Compare Ford's tragedy on a similar subject with Shelley's, and though Ford is little, if at all, inferior to any of our old dramatists but Shakspeare, and the tragedy in question, though highly disgusting, is his best work, how poor does he seem beside Shelley! Looking at the Cenci only as a work of art, and averting our eyes from the subject, we are compelled to admit, that the plot is well conceived, the characters all individuals, consistent with themselves, their country and their age, and the language

throughout the sublime and glorious union of imagination with passion, of clearness with conciseness, of force with beauty. How artist-like, touching and beautiful, is Camillo's first allusion to Beatrice!

“Where is your wife, where is your gentle daughter?
Methinks her sweet looks, which make all things else
Beauteous and glad, might kill the fiend within you.”

Again, what can exceed in sweetness and pathos her first appearance in conversation with her unworthy lover!

“Pervert not truth,
Orsino. You remember where we held
That conversation; — nay we see the spot
Even from this cypress; — two long years are past,
Since, on an April midnight, underneath
The moonlight ruins of Mount Palatine,
I did confess to you my secret mind.

.
.
.

Alas, Orsino! All the love that once
I felt for you, is turned to bitter pain.
Ours was a youthful contract, which you first
Broke, by assuming vows no pope will loose.
And thus I love you still, but holily,
Even as a sister or a spirit might;
And so I swear a cold fidelity.
And it is well, perhaps, we shall not marry.
You have a sly, equivocating vein,
That suits me not. — Ah! wretched that I am!

Where shall I turn? Even now you look on me,
As you were not my friend, and as if you
Discovered that I thought so, with false smiles,
Making my true suspicion seem your wrong."

It is peculiarly the business of a poet to observe the workings of his own mind. This internal observation we trace in the words of Giacomo : —

"Ask me not what I think ; th' unwilling brain
Feigns often what it would not ; and we trust
Imagination with such phantasies,
As the tongue dares not fashion into words, —
Which have no words, — their horror makes them dim
To the mind's eye.— My heart denies itself
To think what you demand."

With what grandeur does Beatrice first intimate her fatal resolution !

"All must be suddenly resolved and done.
What is this undistinguishable mist
Of thoughts, which rise, like shadow after shadow,
Darkening each other ?

Shelley, in his beautiful preface to the *Cenci*, states, that the description of the chasm in the third act was suggested by a passage in the *Purgatorio* de San Patricio of Calderon. As this imitation is, perhaps, the most sublime description in modern English poetry, and the great Spaniard far less known than he deserves to be, it may not be uninteresting to subjoin a portion of the original. It is

in the octave stanza, for the Spanish drama, free as air, admits every variety, both of matter and form.

“No ves ese peñasco, que parece
Que se està sustentando con trabajo,
Y con el ansia misma que padece,
Ha tantos siglos que se viene abaxo?
Pues mordaza es, que sella, y enmudece
El aliento à una boca, que debaxo
Abierta està, por donde con pereza
El monte melancolico bosteza.

“Està, pues, de cypreses rodeada,
Entre los labios de una, y òtra peña,
Descubre la cerviz desaliñada,
Suelto el cabello, a quien serviò de greña
Inutil yerva, aun no del sol tocada,
Donde en sombras, y lexos nos enseña
Un espacio, un vacio horror del dia,
Funesto albergue de la noche fria.”

It will be observed that both in Calderon, and in Shelley's imitation, the mountain is not described literally, but personified.

The murder scene in the Cenci is only surpassed by the corresponding scene in Macbeth. The pathetic song,

“False friend, wilt thou smile or weep—”

is in admirable keeping, and conceived in the very spirit of our old dramatists. In splendour of

execution and concentrated depth of interest this most painful and sublime tragedy never falls off for an instant, from the opening dialogue of Camillo and Cenci to the passionate despair and more touching final tranquillity of Beatrice, as she is led away to the scaffold. The more we study it the more sensible do we become of the extraordinary power and variety of the author's genius. It belongs, however, rather to the classical than to the romantic drama.

The Fragment of Charles I. is not only a fragment, but unfinished and imperfect even as far it goes ; the author would obviously have made considerable alterations in it had he lived. Shelley's politics are too transparent ; he wants the glorious impartiality of Shakspeare on this head ; yet there are touches in his Charles I. more decidedly Shaksperian than will readily be found elsewhere. Thus :—

“ Third Speaker.

See how gloriously
The mettled horses in the torchlight stir
Their gallant riders, while they check their pride,
Like shapes of some diviner element !

“ Second Speaker.

Aye, there they are —
Nobles and sons of nobles, patentees,
Monopolists, and stewards of this poor farm,
On whose lean sheep sit the prophetic crows.
Here is the pomp that strips the houseless orphan,

Here is the pride that breaks the desolate heart.
 These are the lilies glorious as Solomon,
 Who toil not, neither do they spin, — unless
 It be the webs they catch poor rogues withal.
 Here is the surfeit which to them who earn
 The niggard wages of the earth, scarce leaves
 The tithe that will support them, till they crawl
 Back to its cold, hard bosom. Here is health
 Followed by grim disease, glory by shame,
 Waste by lame famine, wealth by squalid want,
 And England's sin by England's punishment.
 And, as th' effect pursues the cause foregone,
 Lo, giving substance to my words, behold
 At once the sign and the thing signified —
 A troop of cripples, beggars, and lean outcasts,
 Horsed upon stumbling shapes, carted with dung,
 Dragged for a day from cellars and low cabins,
 And rotten hiding-holes, to point the moral
 Of this presentiment, and bring up the rear
 Of painted pomp with misery !

“ Speaker.

’Tis but
 The antimasque, and serves as discords do
 In sweetest music. Who would love May flowers
 If they succeeded not to winter’s flaw ;
 Or day unchanged by night ; or joy itself
 Without the touch of sorrow ? ”

Again

“ King.

My Lord,
 Pray overlook these papers. Archy’s words
 Had wings, but these have talons.

“ *Queen.*

And the lion
That wears them must be tamed. My dearest Lord,
I see the new-born courage in your eye,
Armed to strike dead the spirit of the time.

.
.

Have you not noted that the fool of late
Has lost his careless mirth, and that his words
Sound like the echoes of our saddest fears?
What can it mean? I should be loth to think
Some factious slave had tutored him.

“ *King.*

It partly is,
That our minds piece the vacant intervals
Of his wild words with their own fashioning;
As in the imagery of summer clouds,
Or coals in the winter fire, idlers find
The perfect shadows of their teeming thoughts:
And partly that the terrors of the time
Are sown by wandering rumour in all spirits;
And in the lightest and the least, may best
Be seen the current of the coming wind.”

Of Shelley's longer poems, *Adonais* is perhaps the best. It is a poem of fanciful grief, conceived in the spirit of Milton's *Lycidas*. Of all Shelley's poems, however, there are none on which we can dwell with such unmixed delight as his lyrics. They display an inexhaustible fancy, extreme sweetness, and a fine air of poetical melancholy, which, how-

ever, is of rather too sombre a cast. The best of them are; the Skylark; the Sensitive Plant; the Cloud, which is somewhat fantastic; the two poems on Mutability; the lines written in Lechlade Churchyard; and in dejection at Naples; Arethusa; a Dirge for the Year; Autumn, a dirge; Lines to Night; from the Arabic; the World's Wanderers; with a Guitar; to the Queen of my Heart; Hymn of Apollo; and the poems beginning, "When the lamp is shattered;" "Oh there are spirits of the air;" "The cold earth slept below;" "Rarely, rarely comest thou;" and "A Lament," which may be quoted as a favourable and characteristic specimen. There is nothing exceptionable in any of these poems.

"Swifter far than summer's flight,
 Swifter far than youth's delight,
 Swifter far than happy night,
 Art thou come and gone :
 As the earth when leaves are dead,
 As the night when sleep is sped,
 As the heart when joy is fled,
 I am left alone.

"The swallow summer comes again,
 The owlet night resumes her reign,
 But the wild swan youth is fain
 To fly with thee, false as thou.
 My heart each day desires the morrow,
 Sleep itself is turned to sorrow,
 Vainly would my winter borrow
 Sunny leaves from any bough.

“Lilies for a bridal bed,
Roses for a matron’s head,
Violets for a maiden dead,
Pansies let my flowers be :
On the living grave I bear,
Scatter them without a tear,
Let no friend, however dear,
Waste one hope, one fear for me.”

Let the reader compare this sad song with one equally sweet and more cheerful in Beaumont and Fletcher’s “Queen of Corinth,” and say whether both might not have been written by the same author.

“Weep no more, nor sigh nor groan,
Sorrow calls no time that’s gone :
Violets plucked, the sweetest rain
Makes not fresh, nor grow again :
Trim thy locks, look cheerfully,
Fate’s hidden ends, eyes cannot see ;
Joys like winged dreams fly fast !
Why should sadness longer last !
Grief is but a wound to woe,
Gentlest fair, mourn, mourn no more.”

There are lyrics of a very high order in Shelley’s Prometheus, and Hellas. The Masque of Anarchy also, recently published by Mr. Leigh Hunt, bears the impress of a genuine poet. There is no man of genius whose life and death were more melancholy than Shelley’s. There is every reason for supposing,

and it is charity to suppose it, that his mind was partially deranged. His imagination appears to have been so vivid that he could scarcely distinguish its workings from real facts. To use his own language,

“He came like a dream in the dawn of life:
He fled like a shadow before its noon.”

It would be unjust to Shelley to omit mentioning the extraordinary excellence of his poetical translations. The highest merit of a translation is, that it should be characteristic of the original ; and in this point we have nothing in English superior to his versions of the Walpurgi's Nacht in Faust, and the scenes from the “*Magico Prodigioso*” of Calderon.

Shelley's reputation is almost exclusively posthumous, and has, probably, not yet reached its culminating point ; Byron's, on the contrary, has declined since his death, the natural fate of writers who are original without being true. Byron's powers of expression were marvellous, his philosophy of the sneering and therefore shallow kind, and his characters and sentiments for the most part false, exaggerated and monotonous. Don Juan is his most characteristic work, and nowhere, perhaps, is there to be found so painful and complete a picture of a mind of the same power, so thoroughly debased and polluted. Yet there are intermingled

gleams of higher aspirations, and when they appear, with what careless vigour and raciness are they expressed !

“ And I will war, at least in words, and should
My chance so happen, deeds, with all who war
With thought, and of thought's foes by far most rude
Tyrants and sycophants have been and are :
I know not who may conquer, if I could
Have such a prescience, it should be no bar
To this my plain, sworn, downright detestation
Of every despotism in every nation.”

Byron's lines to Ianthé, and to his Sister, are among the purest of his poems. But the gem of all his lyrics, which glow with not less passion and energy than his longer poems, is, perhaps, the noble Ode on “The Isles of Greece.” The wild and imaginative song of Ashtarothe, intended to have been inserted in *Manfred*, is unlike all his other writings.

“ The raven sits
On the raven-stone *,
And his black wing flits
O'er the milk-white bone :
To and fro, as the night-winds blow,
The carcass of the murderer swings,
And there alone, on the raven-stone,
The raven flaps his dusky wings.

* Raven-stone, Rabenstein, is in German a gibbet.

“The fetters creak, and his ebon beak
Croaks to the close of the hollow sound,
And this is the tune, by the light of the moon,
To which the witches dance their round :
Merrily, merrily, cheerily, cheerily,
Merrily speeds the ball,
The dead in their shrouds, and the demons in clouds
Flock to the witches’ carnival.”

Byron’s great excellence is the racy freshness and fervid eloquence with which he describes the thoughts and feelings excited by the sublimer scenes of nature, and the more beautiful creations of art. His success, after making due allowance for the influence of his rank and social position, was principally owing to his skill in presenting sentiments, only not insipid because mischievous, in an inexhaustible variety of vigorous language.

Goethe did not reign over German literature with more absolute and undisputed supremacy than Scott did over English, during the latter years of his life. On works so universally known, and so long the constant theme of criticism, it would be useless and impertinent to dwell. In prose fiction, Scott excelled all his contemporaries, as decidedly as Shakspeare did his contemporary dramatists; the only fictions superior to his, as *Don Quixote*, the *Arabian Nights*, the *Romances of Chivalry*, the *Pilgrim’s Progress*, and perhaps *Robinson Crusoe*, are al-

together of a different kind. He possessed the enviable art of making every subject he touched amusing, and of charming all his acquaintances by his exquisite "bonhommie." His mind was of the descriptive, rather than of the reflective cast. Picturesque rather than philosophical, he delighted to paint nature and men, in German phrase, objectively; to give men's sayings and doings, not to analyse their thoughts, or to trace events to their remote causes. Had he been more profound he would probably have been less popular. Of his poems there are three which seem to have more of the real "œstrum" than all the rest:—the lyric on one of the feats of his favourite Claverhouse:—

"To the Lords of Convention 'twas Claver'se who spoke,"

which is quite Homeric; the Pibroch of Donald Dhu, and Macgregor's Gathering. Burns has done nothing better, unless it be "the Jolly Beggars."*

There is a class in society to whose tastes Moore

* Mr. Lockhart has grievously diminished our respect for Scott's character, by publishing among his works an elaborate article from the Quarterly Review on his great masterpiece, "Old Mortality." The article is just and discriminating, and the praise not at all too lavish, if it had come from any other hand than the author's. Such an artifice was unworthy of an honest man.

is better adapted than any poet of his time. He is the poet of the refined, selfish and jaded voluptuary. Not that he can be termed strictly voluptuous. Strange as it may seem at first sight, there is a depth and a simplicity in that expressive and beautiful word, which Moore never reaches. There is not reality enough about him even for that. He is altogether "false and hollow," — from his love, which is lewdness ; and his politics, which are sedition ; to his imagery, which is tinsel ; and his versification, which is meretricious ; — in every thing, save in his dislike and dread of people who are honest and serious in their opinions. His poems are for the most part but sweet, lively frippery. Therefore he is, beyond all others, the poet of the unprincipled, of the bubbles of society ; men whose sort of half-love of literature is almost the only thing human about them ; and who like him as much as they are capable of liking poetry, because he reconciles them to themselves, by persuading them that the principle they are conscious of wanting is but hypocrisy and pretence in others. There have been writers more immoral than Moore, for he is seldom if ever profound, but, perhaps, for that very reason not one more calculated to be generally mischievous. He combines immorality sentimentally disguised with the rare talent of accommodating himself closely to

the general taste, insensibly corrupting the affections and deceiving the understanding, while he prepares “a primrose way to the everlasting bonfire.” *

Whether Moore has really done much mischief or not it is impossible to say. If he has not, it is no fault of his. He has devoted his powers to vicious objects with as much constancy as could well be expected of him; if the results have not been commensurate, the reason is, that the influence of books has ceased to be considerable in this book-making age. The race of “*homines unius libri*” is extinct.

Moore has not pursued his course without some compunction, and occasional glimpses of better things. His lines on his own birth-day, some of the best he has written, surely shew real feeling. Again, the following verses are not only exquisitely sweet, but also perfectly pure : —

“ Come, May, with all thy flowers,
Thy sweetly-scented thorn ;
Thy cooling evening showers,
Thy fragrant breath at morn ;
When May-flies haunt the willow,
When May-buds tempt the bee,
Then o’er the shining billow
My love will come to me.”

But these are exceptions only to the ordinary tone

* Shakspeare.

of his poetry, which, not the extraordinary, is the true index to an author's mind.

The ease of Moore's versification is not to be surpassed. Those who require splendour of diction, rich and various melody, he will not satisfy, but he writes with an entire absence of all appearance of effort. Ovid's celebrated

“ Sponte suâ carmen numeros veniebat ad aptos,
Et quod tentabam scribere versus erat,”

seems almost poor beside the lines,

“ Pale, broken flower, what art can now recover thee,
Torn from the stem that fed thy rosy breath!

In vain the sunbeams seek

To warm thy faded cheek,

The dews of heaven, that once like balm fell over thee,

Now are but tears to weep thy early death.”

Yet even this is but hiding an utter want of real feeling with a sentimental varnish. No one but a boarding-school miss can avoid seeing that Moore cares not a rush for all the “pale, broken flowers,” whether real or metaphorical, which ever were, or ever will be gathered, and left to wither and die. It is but just to Moore to add, after having enumerated his faults, with, it may be, too much harshness, that he is free from self-satisfaction, the most hopeless of all.

Moore has struck out a new path in political

satire. His sparkling arrowy showers of wit and sarcasm are as ethereal, and fall as naturally, as if they really came from the clouds. Almost all modern political satires are imitations of Moore, a proof of his originality and excellence. Such productions are necessarily ephemeral, and lose much of their point as the individuals who are the subjects of them pass away, and their peculiarities are forgotten. Time makes all personal satire more or less insipid, from Aristophanes, who has received more pedantic than genuine homage, to the *Dunciad* and the *Anti-Jacobin*.

Crabbe is also to be added to the long list of contemporary original poets. He writes occasionally with great power and pathos, but the chief portion of his works is but prose tagged with rhymes — Dutch painting, most vivid it is true, but shewing nature just as it is, or rather below than above the reality. Crabbe, like Wordsworth, seems to have mistaken naked nature for poetry. The great master, who, of all the men that ever lived, best understood and practised the poetical art, scarcely drew a single character from mere observation, as Coleridge remarks in his *Lecture on Romeo and Juliet*. However, the talent of observing accurately, though not of itself poetical, is a necessary ingredient in the poetical character; far from common, and intrinsically valuable on many grounds.

No age since that of Elizabeth has been so prolific in poets as our own. The authors already mentioned are voluminous enough to furnish any man, not more than moderately enamoured of the Muses, with poetical reading for his whole life. Yet how many contemporary poets are still to be named? Campbell, the author of some half-dozen spirit-stirring lyrics, which are in every one's mouth; Rogers, neat and terse, and the most popish of the moderns; Milman, gorgeous; Barry Cornwall, elegant and fanciful; Keats, who has much of the spirit of Shelley; Miss Landon, who has of late improved greatly, and written some lyrics not unworthy of Schiller himself; Mrs. Hemans, sweet, pure and feminine; Sotheby, one of our most correct and skilful translators, a man whose benevolent and serene old age it was delightful to contemplate; Joanna Baillie; Alford, a young poet of much promise; Wolfe, the author of the magnificent lyric on the funeral of Sir John Moore; Hartley Coleridge, who has inherited no inconsiderable portion of the mantle of his father; Bulwer, who has it in him to do something better than he has ever yet done, when he can persuade himself to lay aside his jaunty foppery, and write like a man; Elliott, who seems to consider the corn laws the cause of all human ills, but who has a vein of real sweetness intermingled with his absurd ferocity; James Montgo-

mery, the author of one of our noblest hymns; Moultrie, who has of late added considerably to his early reputation as the author of "My Brother's Grave;" and several others, who might have obtained more notice in an age when books were less plentiful, or the versifying talent less common.

As the world grows older, and literary treasures accumulate, it necessarily becomes more difficult to achieve a literary reputation. Distinction of every kind is indeed less easily attained, from the altered state of society, and the general diffusion of knowledge, which have increased the number of competitors to an enormous extent. But statesmen and professional men have to contend with the living only, and among the living but with their own countrymen; a literary man both with the living and the dead of all ages and of all climes. To become well acquainted with the authors of the very highest rank only in the principal European languages is a task which must now occupy several years; therefore each successive generation must in self-defence grow more fastidious, and push the vernier of fame some degrees higher up the intellectual barometer.

There yet remain some poets whose claims to notice are of a high order, though very recent, Mr. Alfred Tennyson, Mr. Henry Taylor, and Mr. Serjeant Talfourd.

The poems of Tennyson are too purely imaginative, too far removed from the sympathies of the masses, to be popular, even were the age more poetical than it is, but he will not be neglected by those who love to linger over the rich and flowing melodies of Spenser, Goethe, or Shelley. He possesses great fertility both of imagination and fancy, harmony and sweetness,—the five stanzas preceding the choral song in the *Lotus-eaters* are to the full as sweet as Spenser himself,—genuine pathos, and he can be sometimes, though but too rarely, terse and definite. The best of his poems are, I think, *Mariana in the moated Grange*, and in the *South*, *Oriana*, the *Palace of Art*, a most gorgeous vision, the *Sisters*, one of the sublimest ballads in the language, the *Lotus-eaters*, a *Dream of Fair Women*, and the *Death of the Old Year*. For the neglect with which he has been treated by the public, he has, it must be confessed, in part to thank his own affectation, in publishing the *Darling Room*, and other intolerable impertinencies. He is also too ambitious, the common fault of a young author. Great writers, as Goethe and others, often touch upon the very verge of no meaning, but, it will be observed, in the first instance they make themselves perfectly familiar with all the treasures of language, and then, and not till then, do they venture to play with their tools, which are words,

in all the security of a master-mind. Tennyson is sometimes not merely obscure, but he seems to use words on the political knave's principle, as if they were given him to conceal his meaning, or to make people believe that he has a meaning, when in point of fact he has none. The world is too old and too busy to perplex itself with any such poetical puzzles. Tennyson has as good a chance as any living poet of obtaining the public ear whenever he chooses to employ his rich and various powers on some subject of general interest.

Mr. Henry Taylor has been the first to introduce the dramatic romance in an original English dress, a valuable service to literature, as the species of poem in question has, in the landscape gardener's phrase, great capabilities, and is exceedingly readable. Philip van Artevelde is on the whole too elaborate, the art is too apparent, it is stuffed too full of sputtering Flemish names, and occasionally too coarse, but the character of Artevelde is a noble and philosophic conception, and the execution not unworthy of the design. It is the best portrait of a great popular leader that has ever been drawn, and will serve hereafter to throw considerable light on the character of the author's age. The book is of a kind we seldom meet with now-a-days, abounding in aphorisms, the repository of a rich store of long-hoarded thought. The two principal female

characters, Adriana and Elena, are drawn with a delicate and discriminating pencil. Clara is not so successful. The boy-king is excellent, standing out of the canvass with a few touches. Byron boasted of having written a poem of which 15,000 copies were sold in a day, meaning, I believe, the false and mouthy Corsair. Philip van Artevelde, a work of a far higher kind, has barely reached a second edition. How many extrinsic circumstances, wholly independent of merit, must be combined to please the "magnanimos Remi nepotes!"

Mr. Serjeant Talfourd's *Ion* is a beautiful and classical drama, and, strangely enough, has been eminently successful on the stage. Without adhering so closely to the Greek forms as Milton has done in *Sampson Agonistes*, the stiffest and most pedantic of all his works, Mr. Talfourd has so far infused a Greek tone and spirit into his play, as to make it the best English example of the severe fatalism of "the lofty, grave tragedians."

"Sola Sophocleo tua carmina digna cothurno."

In some respects it is too Greek. Sophocles or Euripides, fatalists as they were, would scarcely have undertaken a plot so hard, and so remote from all the common sympathies of mankind. It sins grievously against the Horatian maxim,

"Nec deus intersit nisi dignus vindice nodus."

Argos is ravaged with a pestilence for the crimes of its sovereigns. For any thing that appears in the play to the contrary, Apollo might have selected any other town for the same infliction with equal justice. We hear of nothing calling for peculiar vengeance in the case of the Argive monarchs, and Adrastus, the reigning prince, is not even wicked enough to be interesting. The plague at Thebes, in the *Œdipus Tyrannus*, is certainly caused by the "king's offence," but that king, though ignorantly, had killed his father and married his mother, and therefore some cause is shewn for the divine wrath. When the discovery, gradually evolved with the most consummate art, is complete, *Œdipus* abdicates his throne and puts out his eyes, but *Sophocles* does not think it necessary that he should commit self-murder, like the innocent *Ion*, to appease the gods. The English poet has thus given to the deities of Olympus a much sterner and more repulsive character than the Athenian. The plot of *Ion* is therefore defective, and also contrary to the eternal principles of truth and beauty, which can never permit us to contemplate self-murder in other than an odious light.

Ion is occasionally rather sickly and sentimental, but the language is highly poetical, abounding in beautiful imagery, though not always quite as chaste and terse as dramatic propriety requires.

Serjeant Talfourd, as all who have heard him speak well know, has always a rich store of eloquence and fancy at command, and he has lavished it upon this tragedy, but the consequence is that he is sometimes obscure and sometimes diffuse; the language not being sufficiently simple and subdued, the attention is drawn too much to the details, and the play as a whole is deficient in keeping. How different is the language of the unreasonable and insolent sages, in the third scene of the second act, describing the pestilence to the ill-used Adrastus, from the calm dignity of the priest in Sophocles, addressing Œdipus on the same subject!

“ Πόλις γὰρ, ὥσπερ καὐτὸς εἰσοράς, ἄγαν
 ἤδη σαλεύει, κἄνακουφίσαι κἄρα
 βυθῶν ἔτ’ οὐχ οἷα τε φοινίου σάλου,
 φθίνουσα μὲν κάλυξιν ἐγκάρποις χθονὸς,
 φθίνουσα δ’ ἀγέλαις βουνόμοις, τόκοισί τε
 ἀγόνοις γυναικῶν· ἐν δ’ ὁ πυρφόρος θεὸς
 σκῆψας ἐλαύνει, λοιμὸς ἔχθιστος, πόλιν·
 ὕφ’ οὗ κενοῦται δῶμα Καδμεῖον, μέλας δ’
 Ἄδης στεναγμοῖς καὶ γόοις πλουτίζεται.

.

Ὡς εἶπερ ἄρξεις τῇσδε γῆς, ὥσπερ κρατεῖς
 ξὺν ἀνδράσιν κάλλιον ἢ κενῆς κρατεῖν,
 ὥς οὐδέν ἐστιν, οὔτε πύργος οὔτε ναὺς
 ἔρημος ἀνδρῶν μὴ ξυνοικούντων ἔσω.”

Ion came upon the public with all the grace of

novelty, and to that and to the forensic reputation of its author, it appears to be indebted for its theatrical success, rather than to any peculiar fitness for the stage. On the first night of its representation, this magnificent passage in the last scene between Ion and Clemanthe, perhaps the very finest in the whole play, passed unnoticed.

“ *Clemanthe,*

And shall we never see each other ?

“ *Ion.*

Yes.

I have asked that dreadful question of the hills
That look eternal ; of the flowing streams
That lucid flow for ever ; of the stars,
Amid whose fields of azure my raised spirit
Hath trod in glory : all were dumb ; but now,
While I thus gaze upon thy living face,
I feel the love that kindles through its beauty
Can never wholly perish ; — we shall meet
Again, Clemanthe !”

The situation here is highly dramatic.

Goethe in his *Iphigenia in Tauris* appears rather as a rival than as an imitator of the Greeks. He has certainly far surpassed the play of Euripides on the same subject. *Iphigenia* is one of the loftiest and purest female characters anywhere to be found. She possesses the art of eliciting from every person she meets the noblest and best feelings of his

nature. In a moment of weakness indeed, she consents to the scheme of Pylades for escaping, by deceiving Thoas, the king of the country, the mode in which Euripides actually manages the escape; but the slightest shadow of falsehood is too repulsive to the purity of her nature to enable her to carry it into execution; she tells the king, her rejected lover, all; and obtains from his sense of justice, barbarian as he is, and from his respect for her character, a final permission to depart in peace with her brother and his friend. The costume is of course perfectly Greek, as was to be expected from Goethe. One can hardly believe these dactyls to have been written by a modern :

“Denn die Unsterbliche lieben der Menschen
 Weit verbreitende, gute Geschlechter,
 Und sie fristen das flüchtige Leben
 Gerne dem Sterblichen, wollen ihm gerne
 Ihres eigenen ewigen Himmels
 Mitgeniessendes fröhliches Anschauen
 Eine Weile gönnen und lassen.”

In one beautiful and pathetic passage Goethe is, it may be, more picturesque than a Greek would have been: Orestes is speaking.

“Wie oft, wenn still Elektra, meine Schwester,
 Am Feuer in der tiefen Halle sass,
 Drängt’ ich beklommen mich an ihrem Schoos,
 Und starrte, wie Sie bitter weinte, Sie
 Mit grossen Augen an.”

There is nothing in the Greek tragedians equalling, in sublime simplicity, the song of the Fates,—

“Es fürchte die Götter

Das Menschengeschlecht!”—U. S. W.

It is no slight praise of Mr. Serjeant Talfourd, to admit that his play is not utterly thrown into the shade by one of the master-pieces of this great prince of all the poets of his time.

The decline of the stage in England is not to be regretted on any ground, whether of morality or taste. There was a time when it was the custom to talk of the stage as holding up the mirror to vice, and so forth. Upon the strength of this doctrine, for the purpose it would seem of looking at themselves in this moral mirror, many of the most abandoned characters in this vast city assemble nightly at the theatres. The truth is the stage, ever since the Restoration, has been and still is a school of profaneness, immorality and bad taste. The plays written during the earlier part of the eighteenth century, to which Madame de Stael alluded when she said, “Rien ne ressemble moins aux Anglais que leur comedie,” still maintain their place. The generalisation would not have been too sweeping, if for the word English she had substituted mankind. There is scarcely a pure or noble sentiment to be found among the great

majority of these writers, the very refuse of our literature; witty, indeed, some of them certainly are, but indecency and low trickery, the easiest and most common-place mode of amusing the vulgar, are their staple, and when they mean to be moral they are only preeminently insipid.

But Shakspeare still maintains his popularity. Shakspeare, it is true, is as perfect a dramatist as he is a poet; his situations tell scenically even without the assistance of his matchless language. He reigns on the stage as a dramatist only, not as a poet; the actors mangle his text in the most villainous way, and some of them have had the ineffable conceit to believe they could improve him. In the beautiful concluding scene of the *Winter's Tale*, Leontes rapturously exclaims,

“ If this be magic, let it be an art
Lawful as eating.”

A stage copy I once saw alters it to

“ Sacred as religion ! ”

translating into the mawkish vernacular of the stage the natural raciness of the poet. To this day it is Dryden's *Tempest*, not Shakspeare's, which is acted. I remember at Vienna seeing *Macbeth* translated by Schiller acted line for line as Schiller wrote it; the German actors had more sense than to

suppose themselves greater poets than Schiller and Shakspeare. But who in this country ever saw Shakspeare acted as Shakspeare wrote? Milton's *Comus* has been travestied for the use of the stage in like manner. The reform of the stage would seem to be hopeless.

This chapter has been extended to a somewhat disproportionate length. It may be inferred from the whole that the object of poetry is not directly morality, nor yet truth, but beauty in every form, and in the most comprehensive sense. To the developement of beauty all other matters are, poetically speaking, subsidiary; yet how mighty is the force of this word! It embraces all the glories not only of the external or physical, but of the internal or imaginative world, brighter and serener far. Redeeming whatever is mean and vile, it contemplates humanity under every aspect of interest, whether it be, to borrow an illustration from sculpture, the passion of *Laocoon*, the grace of *Venus*, or the majesty of *Apollo*. Immoral, beauty cannot be, for immorality is a disturbing force, violating the repose of harmony. Hence it is that to poetry, as the most comprehensive and plastic of the beautiful arts, all ages have attributed something divine. It has served as a medium for transmitting to later generations the most ancient histories and the most ancient laws; and gratifying equally both the

imagination and the reason, and impressing itself firmly on the memory, it has been chosen by Infinite Wisdom, as a ministering spirit, to convey to mankind the most vital truths of Religion.

OF UTILITARIANISM.

Nihil tam metuens, quàm ne dubitare aliquâ de re videretur.

Cicero de Naturâ Deorum.

The mixture of those things by speech which by nature are divided, is the mother of all error.—*Hooker.*

To those, and their number is not small, in whose eyes Utilitarianism and Utilitarians, Bentham, Benthamese and Benthamites, are an abomination, we say with old Ariosto,

“ Lasciate questo cänto, che senz’esso

Può star l’istoria, e non sarà men chiara.”

There are at least four reasons for not thinking Mr. Jeremy Bentham* a philosopher. In the first place, he is an habitual sneerer, who can never argue without grinning; secondly, he cannot look at both sides of a question, and seldom sees the whole even of one side; thirdly, he is a dogmatist who denounces all who differ from him; and fourthly, he has false notions of human nature, and thinks

* A new edition of Mr. Bentham’s works is now in the course of publication.

that all reform is to come from without, and none from within by the purification of the heart.

The object of this chapter is to consider some of the leading doctrines of the Utilitarians on the subjects of religion and morals, as set forth in the works of their principal writers, Messrs. Bentham, Mill, and Austin; premising that we altogether disclaim making either of these authors in any way responsible for the opinions of the other two, and that we take their writings as the text-books of Utilitarianism, merely because it is generally supposed that they contain a more accurate and complete developement of the peculiar doctrines of the sect than is elsewhere to be found.

On the subject of religion it is easier to ascertain what Bentham's opinions were not than what they were. Incidental allusions to it are scattered through his works, but it is from two of his publications treating of religion exclusively, and therefore it must be presumed deliberately, that it appears safest to infer what he really thought. These are, the book styled "Not Paul, but Jesus," intended to prove St. Paul an impostor, and the examination of the Catechism of the Church of England, in the work to which he has affixed the strange and uncouth, but characteristic title of "Church of Englandism."

The first peculiarity which strikes us on looking

into "Not Paul, but Jesus," is its total want of method. It professes to be a sort of commentary on the New Testament, a considerable portion of which the author assumes not to be authentic. For this supposition he gives no reason whatever, nor does he anywhere determine how much of the New Testament he believes to be authentic, and how much the contrary, but misrepresents, contradicts, and omits passages throughout his work, just as it suits his convenience. The whole argument, if argument it can be called, is a begging of the question from beginning to end, united in almost every page with the contemptible fallacy of imputing to an opponent what he never intended to say, and then arguing against the false meaning as if it were the real one. It is in this manner that, by leaving out of sight the distinction made by the apostles in the treatment of Gentile and Jewish converts, he actually, incredible as it may seem, charges St. Paul with perjury! Chap. xi.

At p. 283, and indeed everywhere, he displays such deplorable ignorance of Scripture as would almost lead us to suppose that he had undertaken to write a commentary upon it without first reading it.

At p. 299 he says, "Nowhere in the account given of his transactions by the author of the Acts, is he," meaning St. Paul, "in any of his speeches

represented as making reference to any one act of his in the character of a miracle."

"Not by the author of the Acts is he spoken of as being in possession of any such power."

He might just as well have said at once that St. Paul's name was never mentioned in the Acts. In the Acts, chap. xv. 12, it is said :

"Then all the multitude kept silence, and gave audience to Barnabas and Paul, declaring what miracles and wonders God had wrought among the Gentiles by them."

Not only is it said in the Acts generally that "God wrought special miracles by the hands of Paul:" but many of the apostle's miracles are related at full length in the most circumstantial manner.

Immediately after having asserted that St. Paul is not spoken of in the Acts as being in possession of miraculous powers, Mr. Bentham, p. 302, et seq. goes through his miracles *seriatim*, asserting them all to be impostures ; not seeing that his two assertions cannot exist together, for if St. Paul is not spoken of as being in possession of miraculous powers in the Acts, he cannot be accused of pretending to work miracles ; if he can be accused of pretending to work miracles, he must be spoken of as being in possession of miraculous powers.

Bentham's only arguments against the miracles of St. Paul are, as usual, begging the question and

contradicting the Bible. One instance will suffice; the Bible says, Elymas was miraculously struck with blindness: Bentham says, "By an understanding between Paul and Elymas, the sorcerer, for the season that was thought requisite, kept his eyes shut."

Again, St. Paul says he received the Gospel "by revelation from Jesus Christ;" Bentham says, "it was made by him out of his own head." p. 368.

He misinterprets St. Paul's prophecy of the day of judgment to mean that the day of judgment would happen during the lives of some then living, and on this misinterpretation he founds a charge of falsehood against the apostle.

If a man were to write such trash as this on any other book than the Bible, it would at once be held conclusive of the character of his mind; but because the book thus grossly insulted is the most sacred of all books, it seems a man may speak of it with the most drivelling sophistry and the most loathsome blasphemy, and yet be a philosopher, as some understand that much-abused word.

Nothing can be more disgusting than the spirit of "Not Paul, but Jesus." If the reader wishes for a particular instance, let him turn to page 344. It is the work of a mind radically and irredeemably vulgar, and one continued sneer from the first page to the last, without a particle of wit or liveliness.

Bentham's book, absurd as it is, is founded upon a common error, that of supposing the Gospels entitled to more respect than the Epistles. Our Saviour, in his last discourse to his disciples, says, "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth." John xvi. 12. It was by this final and more complete revelation of the Spirit of truth that the apostles spoke, and therefore it is that Christianity is more completely developed in their Epistles than in any other part of the Bible.

Bentham's treatise on the Catechism of the Church of England is of the same character with that on St. Paul. At page 22 he says,

"In the same instructive prints, which present to his view the devil in the character of a black man, with horns and tail, he will behold a pigeon hovering in a spot of light. This pigeon, which, however, he will be taught to call not by this name, but by its other and more poetical name, a dove—this pigeon it is, that, if any thing, will be the object of his belief."

We put it to any candid man well versed in infidel writings, whether it has ever been his fate to meet with an instance of such vulgar and revolting blasphemy! Yet this wretched man, in the very act of blaspheming, is indignant at being told

the most certain and indisputable of moral facts, that all men are sinners. See p. 53.

At p. 67. he calls the Lord's Supper "cannibalism." But enough has been said; it is unnecessary to dwell longer on these loathsome books.

Bentham's opinions on morals are not much more valuable than his opinions on religion. He begins his "Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation" thus:—

"Nature has placed mankind under the governance of two sovereign masters, pain and pleasure. It is for them alone to point out what we ought to do, as well as to determine what we shall do." *

It cannot fail to strike every reader of common intelligence, that, in thus dogmatically laying the foundations of his system, Bentham substitutes assertion for argument. Two more disputable propositions perhaps were never laid down; they are not only not proved, but they are not sus-

* Bentham's popularity on the Continent, so far as it exists, may be accounted for by this, among other circumstances, that Dumont, a man whose judgment and knowledge of the world were far superior to his, has modified his opinions, and omitted much of his vulgarity and absurdity. Though Dumont retains the greater portion of Bentham's fallacies, he is rarely offensive, his original very rarely otherwise. Thus, of these two sentences Dumont has modified the first, and thrown the second into a different shape. — See *Traité de Législation Civile et Pénale*, vol. i. p. 3.

ceptible of proof; thus enunciated, they merit nothing better than a simple denial, and if denied, the whole fabric of Utilitarianism crumbles in the dust. There is nothing new in this doctrine, it is but a revival of the old fallacies of the Epicureans. Pain and pleasure are used in a signification much more extensive than they commonly bear, and this perversion of the meaning of two well-known words is, it seems, a grand discovery. Many false systems have no better foundation; but the Utilitarian or Epicurean is the worst of all, because it degrades men's minds by making a word, generally applied to the most vulgar and sensual gratifications, the motive of all their actions.

It is obvious, at the first blush, that to say, one man dies as a martyr at the stake and another drinks a pot of beer from the same motive, is nothing less than to confound all human ideas. Yet this is what Bentham must mean, otherwise pleasure and pain do not "alone point out what men ought to do, or determine what they shall do." Every good man frequently abstains from doing what he would like, because he thinks he ought not to do it. Are we to be told that pleasure is his motive for not doing what he would like to do? Let any individual examine with candour the secret springs of his own actions, does he not find them many and complicated? Does his observation of other men

lead him to believe that their motives are two only, and no more? As Mr. Macaulay well said, in reply to the pother of these sectarians, their favourite dogma, which they choose to term “greatest happiness principle,” “means nothing more than that all men if they can will do as they please.” But we are just as much in the dark as ever as to what all men will please to do. With these words,

“Ὡς ἀτοπον εὐκέ τι εἶναι τοῦτο ὃ καλοῦσιν οἱ ἄνθρωποι ἡδύ,”

Socrates, in the Phædon, commences the famous dialogue on the immortality of the soul. How often are modern infidels put to shame by the wiser and nobler heathens!

By saying, that it is for pleasure and pain “*alone* to point out what we *ought* to do,” Bentham indirectly annihilates conscience, the existence of which he afterwards, page 29, expressly denies, under the synonym of a moral sense.

Though men may differ very materially as to what they think they ought to do, and what they think they ought not, there are still some things which no man can do without internal uneasiness. “I am not bad enough for that,” a criminal will say. What is this uneasiness? We might give it a much stronger name, since it has compelled murderers to disclose their crimes after the lapse of many years, and has driven them to seek an igno-

minious death by their own confession, rather than endure its tortures! If religion be called in to account for it, we find it existing independent of revealed religion, and among men who doubted, and even denied, a future state altogether.

But we may take a higher ground: what is the "*mens sibi conscia recti*," the internal approbation which a man feels when he has done what he believes to be right? Is he gratified because he has procured the maximum of pleasure to himself? Surely not. Here are phenomena, let them be accounted for. To the weight of experience we add the authority of Scripture, and we infer from both that there is an inward witness, serving as an index to right and wrong, which we call conscience; and that its value, like that of all our faculties, depends in a great measure on the frequency of its exercise, that is, if we neglect its admonitions they will become more faint. Let those who reject this explanation give another, and at the same time remember that no Christian can avoid admitting the authority of the Bible to be conclusive on moral questions; they who deny that authority should have the courage to say so openly.

No sooner has Bentham thus arbitrarily placed men under the exclusive empire of pleasure and pain, than he substitutes in his second page happiness for pleasure, as if the two words were mere

synonyms. It is by thus perpetually playing with words that he has succeeded in making some people believe that he has made great discoveries. According to common use,

“ *Quem penes arbitrium est et jus et norma loquendi,*”

the more sensual and vulgar gratifications are termed pleasure, which seems also to imply shortness of duration; happiness implies intellectual and moral enjoyment, and that for a considerable space of time. Hooker thus gives whatever truth there is in Bentham's doctrine without the falsehood:—

“ All men desire to lead in this world a happy life. That life is led most happily, wherein all virtue is exercised without impediment or let.”

The reason why men constantly do what is not for their happiness is, because they are weak, unable to resist present temptation, and led astray by their passions, not because they do not know what is for their happiness, or are in want of any new principle to guide them.

We quote Dumont's exposition of the principle of utility, as being more concise and perspicuous than the original:—

“ *Utilité est un terme abstrait. Il exprime la propriété ou la tendance d'une chose à préserver de quelque mal ou à procurer quelque bien. Mal, c'est peine, douleur ou cause de douleur. Bien,*

c'est plaisir ou cause de plaisir. Ce qui est conforme à l'utilité ou à l'intérêt d'un individu, c'est ce qui tend à augmenter la somme totale de son bien-être. Ce qui est conforme à l'utilité ou à l'intérêt d'une communauté, c'est ce qui tend à augmenter la somme totale du bien-être des individus qui la composent."—*Principes de Législation*, p. 3.

Here we have the same constant fallacy of using common words in a more extended sense than they will bear, and of assuming propositions to be true universally, because they are admitted to be true particularly. Utility and interest are used by Bentham sometimes in a sense more extended than common acceptation will allow, and at others restricted to their ordinary meaning. This is the well-known fallacy of a doubtful middle term, not distributed in the premises, but distributed in the conclusion, or conversely. Thus it is correct to call some things useful, which tend to procure us some good, or to avert from us some evil; but it does not, therefore, follow that whatever tends to procure us any good, or avert any evil, is correctly called useful to us. The Psalmist says, "It is good for me that I have been afflicted," not "it is useful for me that I have been afflicted." The utility of any thing commonly signifies its tendency to procure us some temporary advantage, and is, therefore, opposed with perfect propriety to justice or

veracity, which often procure us temporary disadvantage. In the same manner interest is opposed to duty. The meanings of these words cannot be altered without great confusion, and we should lose instead of gaining by it, inasmuch as our motives of action, through the association of ideas with words, would become worse.

Again, pain is not the only evil, pleasure not the only good. Men have always agreed to call some things evil which are not pain, some things good which are not pleasure.

“ La logique de l'utilité consiste à partir du calcul ou de la comparaison des peines et des plaisirs dans toutes les opérations du jugement, et à n'y faire entrer aucune autre idée.” p. 4.

The utter worthlessness of this calculation we shall see when we come to the catalogue of pains and pleasures.

“ Pour le partisan du principe de l'utilité, la vertu n'est un bien qu'à cause des plaisirs qui en dérivent : le vice n'est un mal qu'à cause des peines qui en sont la suite. Le bien moral n'est bien que par sa tendance à produire des biens physiques : le mal moral n'est un mal que par sa tendance à produire des maux physiques ; mais quand je dis *physiques*, j'entends les peines et les plaisirs de l'âme, aussi bien que les peines et les plaisirs des sens.

J'ai en vue l'homme tel qu'il est dans sa constitution actuelle." p. 5.

We deny at once that any moral system whatever can be founded on this basis. There never was a man whose mind was large enough to perceive all the tendencies of any one action in all its consequences; but even if there were, such a perception is but as a grain of sand to the whole earth in comparison with all the qualifications required. Setting aside conscience, which Bentham rejects, though he must have made use of it, it is utterly impossible that any man can ascertain the tendency of every possible variety of human actions in every possible variety of circumstances. And not only is it impossible for him to ascertain the tendency, but he can neither catalogue the actions nor the circumstances, though both are indispensable preliminaries to his arriving at a conclusion.

The word physical is here perverted in the same manner as pain, pleasure, good, evil, utility, interest, have been perverted before.

It is scarcely necessary to observe, that this system cannot co-exist with revelation, which it should seem Mr. Bentham expected to supersede, p. 36. Revelation gives the will of God as the motive of men's actions. Bentham says men have differed as to what that will is. There can be no doubt that

the divine will may be ascertained so far as is necessary to salvation, by all who sincerely desire it. On the principle of utility, very little can be ascertained ; and the reason why some men suppose they have ascertained much by it is, that they have availed themselves, though they will not acknowledge it, of the assistance of conscience or a moral sense.

The following sentences go to destroy morality altogether.

“ Si le partisan du principe de l'utilité trouvait, dans le catalogue banal des vertus une action dont il resultât plus de peines que de plaisirs, il ne balancerait pas à regarder cette prétendue vertu comme un vice ; il ne s'en laisserait point imposer par l'erreur générale ; il ne croirait pas légèrement qu'on soit fondé à employer de fausses vertus pour le maintien des véritables.

“ S'il trouvait aussi dans le catalogue banal des délits quelque action indifférente, quelque plaisir innocent, il ne balancerait pas à transporter ce prétendu délit dans la classe des actes légitimes ; il accorderait sa pitié aux prétendus criminels, et il réserverait son indignation pour les prétendus vertueux qui les persécutent.” pp. 5, 6.

Who is to decide ? Is every man to make virtue vice, and vice virtue, at discretion ? The Utilita-

rians will indignantly answer, no. We say, no man is fit to lay down the law for all mankind in such a matter.

Bentham is so far entitled to credit, that he works out his principles to their legitimate conclusions, which he gives bluntly, without equivocation or reserve: "Pleasure is in itself a good; nay, even setting aside immunity from pain, the only good: pain is itself an evil; and indeed, without exception, the only evil; or else the words good and evil have no meaning." (He should have added, in his own sense, not in the common acceptation of the words.) "And this is alike true of every sort of pain, and of every sort of pleasure. It follows, therefore, immediately and incontestibly, that *there is no such thing as any sort of motive that is in itself a bad one.*" (The italics are Bentham's.)

"Let a man's motive be ill-will; call it even malice, envy, cruelty; it is still a kind of pleasure that is his motive; the pleasure he takes at the thought of the pain he sees, or expects to see his adversary undergo. Now even this wretched pleasure, taken by itself, is good."—*Principles of Morals and Legislation*. note, p. 169.*

Another man, when he found where he had got

* I cannot find this or the following passage in Dumont.

to, would have suspected he was wrong in calling pleasure the motive of all human actions ; but the possibility of his making a mistake never seems to have entered Bentham's mind. He goes on,

“ With respect to goodness and badness, as it is with every thing else that is not itself either pain or pleasure, so is it with motives. If they are good or bad, it is only on account of their effects : good, on account of their tendency to produce pleasure or avert pain ; bad, on account of their tendency to produce pain or avert pleasure. Now the case is, that from one and the same motive, and from every kind of motive, may proceed actions that are good, others that are bad, and others that are indifferent.” p. 170.

According to this reasoning, there is no distinction between murder and accidental homicide, since the effect, the death of a man, is the same in both cases. They who deny a moral sense will hardly account for the distinction between intentional and accidental injury, which seems, says Butler, to be peculiar to man. All moralists make actions to depend upon motives, not motives upon actions. But this is what the Utilitarians call making discoveries.

In Dumont, Chap. VI., we have a catalogue of pleasures, and another of pains, which required, we

are told, "*un grand travail analytique.*" We have, it seems, fifteen pleasures, and only eleven pains. A comfortable conclusion for the true believers. The eighth chapter, "*De l'estimation des plaisirs et des peines,*" is only to be equalled in solemn absurdity by some passages of *Don Quixote*. We there find that legislation is but a matter of arithmetic. There is no end to our discoveries. We weigh pleasure, like sugar, by the pound; and measure out pain, like cloth, by the yard. The answer to all such stuff is, simply, that we have no means of knowing when moral catalogues are complete or otherwise, and that moral quantities are indeterminate, and therefore cannot be valued. Else wherefore did Plato and Bacon declare, that they would "revere him as a God that could truly divide and define!"

Every man, the Utilitarians say, is not to be expected to make this analysis for himself, in all circumstances; then who has authority to make it for him? Is Bentham to be his oracle? He turns to his oracle, and finds a fallacy, which he may do in almost every page. He says, therefore, to himself, the conclusion cannot be sound because the premises are not; I may do what I like. Thus, he might justify himself in the commission of any crime whatever. But no man ever did or ever will

act exclusively on Utilitarian principles. The utter impracticability of the system is alone its refutation.

How refreshing to turn from these muddy shallows to Hooker's broad and deep stream of lofty thought !

“ Man doth not seem to rest satisfied, either with fruition of that wherewith his life is preserved, or with performance of such actions as advance him most deservedly in estimation; but doth further covet, yea, oftentimes manifestly pursue with great sedulity and earnestness, that which cannot stand him in any stead for vital use; that which exceedeth the reach of sense; yea, somewhat above capacity of reason, somewhat divine and heavenly, which with hidden exultation it rather surmiseth than conceiveth; somewhat it seeketh, and what that is directly it knoweth not, yet very intentive desire thereof doth so incite it, that all other known delights and pleasures are laid aside, they give place to the search of this but only suspected desire. If the soul of man did serve only to give him being in this life, then things appertaining unto this life would content him, as we see they do other creatures; which creatures, enjoying what they live by, seek no further, but in this contentation do shew a kind of acknowledgment that there is no higher good which doth any way belong unto them. With us it is

otherwise. For although the beauties, riches, honours, sciences, virtues, and perfections of all men living were in the present possession of one, yet somewhat beyond and above all this there would still be sought and earnestly thirsted for."

Men have chosen many different foundations on which to build systems of morals. Beauty, which has been preferred by some, though less vulgar, is liable as an exclusive principle to nearly the same objections as utility. It may be doubted whether any system of ethics could ever have been discovered without the assistance of a moral sense. How can those who deny a moral sense account for the fact, that men see their way so much more clearly in ethics than in political economy, though the natural difficulties of the former are so much greater? Let a man listen to the dictates of his own conscience, and consult the Bible humbly and sincerely, and he will seldom or never be in doubt as to what he ought to do.

Bentham's Defence of Usury does not come strictly within the design of this chapter, which is to give some account of the peculiar tenets of the Utilitarians. The Defence of Usury has no necessary connexion with Bentham's peculiar opinions, and might have been written by a man who did not profess them. As it is, however, one of his best works, it would, perhaps, be thought unfair not to

notice it. It is undoubtedly a piece of close and original reasoning, not altogether free from vulgarity, though less vulgar than Bentham usually is, but when its admirers venture to call it exhaustive, they assert what they cannot know. No mind is capable of tracing the effects of a law through all its bearings. In real life there seems to be always some compensating or antagonist force at work, so that the worst laws do not produce all the evil, nor the best all the good, which might at first sight be expected. In the present instance, if the usury laws were totally repealed, without providing for those cases where agreements between lender and borrower left the rate of interest undetermined, great practical evils would ensue from having no fixed legal rate of interest. But Bentham did not know what it was to doubt, when his own theories were in question. Hear Hooker once more :—

“The wisest are always, touching this point, the readiest to acknowledge, that soundly to judge of a law is the weightiest thing which any man can take upon him.”

It is chiefly on his character as a jurist, that Bentham's reputation rests. This subject is far too wide to be more than slightly alluded to here. There is originality, or rather oddity in many of his views, but the faults of his mind, which was greatly too narrow for the business he undertook, are every

where apparent. There is no end of his definitions and divisions, a hollow parade of accuracy without the reality, for nature is too subtle to be thus easily bound; or of his catalogues of what cannot be numbered, measured or weighed. He looked upon man as a piece of mechanism, hence the worthlessness of his philosophy. A sanguine theorist, he could see no difficulties in the execution of his own schemes, or anticipate that they could possibly be followed by other than good effects, hence his sneers and his abuse. Believing that what was clear to himself, must be equally clear to others, he concluded that all were influenced by selfish motives, who would not agree with him in proclaiming that, "whatever is, is wrong," which is really the sum total of his writings, a sentiment, put by Goethe with perfect propriety into the mouth of a fiend,

"Alles was entsteht
Ist's werth, dass es zu Gründe geht."

If this can be said of England, where men have enjoyed greater freedom for a longer time than they ever did elsewhere, what is to be said of all other countries! But Bentham could never see the good produced by existing institutions.

If the exclusive principle of utility will hold anywhere, it is in law, if of no great value in law, it can hardly be worth much in any other instance.

Demosthenes, in his first oration against Aristogeiton, gives his views on the objects of laws thus :

“Οἱ δὲ νόμοι τὸ δίκαιον καὶ τὸ καλὸν καὶ τὸ συμφέρον βού-
λονται, καὶ τοῦτο ζητοῦσι, καὶ ἐπειδὰν εὗρεθῇ, κοινὸν τοῦτο
πρόσταγμα ἀπεδείχθη, πᾶσιν ἴσον καὶ ὅμοιον· καὶ τοῦτ’ ἐστὶ
νόμος, ὃ πάντας προσήκει πείθεσθαι διὰ πολλὰ, καὶ μάλιστα, ὅτ
πᾶς ἐστὶ νόμος, εὖρημα μὲν καὶ δῶρον θεῶν, δόγμα δ’ ἀνθρώπων
φρονίμων, ἐπανόρθωμα δὲ τῶν ἐκουσίων καὶ ἀκουσίων ἁμαρτημάτων,
πόλεως δὲ συνθήκη κοινὴ· καθ’ ἣν πᾶσι προσήκει ζῆν τοῖς ἐν
τῇ πόλει.”

Mr. Bentham would strike out the *τὸ δίκαιον* and the *τὸ καλὸν*, and leave only the *τὸ συμφέρον*. But what is gained by it? The division of Demosthenes is quite as accurate and quite as intelligible as any other. Thus all laws, concerning relations between man and man, might come under the head of “the just;” those concerning the general obligations of religion and morality under that of “the good;” financial and constitutional laws under that of “the useful,” or expedient. According to this arrangement, there would be some difficulty in determining under which head particular branches of law, as criminal law for instance, could with the greatest propriety be classed; but whatever divisions jurists choose to adopt, the same difficulty, or rather impossibility, of a perfectly accurate arrangement will be found; and the matter is of very little practical importance.

Bentham is an advocate for a code, which he says has but two classes of antagonists, dupes and impostors.* But by a code he does not mean a digest of the whole mass of existing law, which, he thinks, with his usual contempt for experience, ought to be entirely discarded, and a new system of abstract definitions, accompanied with a new nomenclature, and certain other indispensable requisites, substituted in its place. Yet, with his accustomed inconsistency, not seeing that the scheme would in all probability be death to the system he has taken such pains to recommend, he would have the government throw the matter open to public competition, in fact advertise for a code, on the following conditions; that each competitor should send in a general outline of his plan, together with some particular chapter, complete as a specimen; that the whole, or at least each grand division, should be the work of one hand; that all parties should work without pay; and that, *cæteris paribus*, a foreigner should be preferred. *De la Codification*, pp. 393, 4.

As it does not appear very probable that this plan will be adopted, it is not necessary to make any remarks upon it. Mr. Bentham has been pleased to present us with his own lucubrations on

* *De la Codification*, p. 380.

the subject of a penal code, which it will be more interesting to consider. Each article of this code is to contain, 1. A definition of the simple crime; 2. An explanation of the terms of the definition; 3. Penalties of the simple crime; 4. Circumstances of aggravation of which it is susceptible, and extra penalty for each; 5. Circumstances of extenuation, and proportionate reduction of penalty; 6. A commentary justifying the law in the form of questions and answers. *De la Codification*, p. 435.

The first questions that arise here are, Whether all these six parts of each article are to be equally law? Whether the text and the commentary are to have precisely the same weight? If not, what distinction is to be made between them, and who is to determine how great that distinction is to be? The following is the definition of larceny given by Dumont, which it appears, however, is not Bentham's, though in strict accordance with his system:—"Il y a délit de vol quand un individu soustrait une chose qu'il estime avoir quelque valeur, avec l'intention d'en faire son profit, et sachant qu'il n'a pas le droit de la prendre."—*De la Codification*, p. 437. .

It would have been shorter to have taken the eighth commandment at once. Laid down in these general terms this is, probably, the law in every civilised country already; but the effect of abroga-

ting all the existing laws against larceny, and of substituting this definition in their place, would be in all but the simplest cases to leave the law entirely in the breast of the judge, who must necessarily decide whether the facts of each particular case come within all the terms of the definition or not. It is also at least wide enough to include swindling and forgery, crimes essentially distinct, and distinguished even according to this system; and it is doubtful, depending upon the construction of the word "soustrait," whether it will not include robbery, burglary, and indeed every mode in which a man can appropriate to himself the property of another, knowing that he has no right to it. The important chapters of practice, pleading, and evidence, in which many of the chief difficulties of law consist, are also left, here at least, entirely untouched. A schoolboy might draw up such a code with ease.

It is curious that the very evil Bentham complains of so bitterly, judge-made laws, would be multiplied a hundred fold by his system, which is substantially that of the Mahometans, and would go far towards depriving us of laws altogether. If we reverse a well-known maxim we get pretty nearly the character of his code: the worst law is that which leaves most to the judge; the worst judge is he who leaves most to himself. Is this the system

which every man must be a fool or a rogue not to admire?

It will be sufficient to give one more specimen, which is Bentham's own:—

“ Il y a injure personnelle simple négative là où, sans cause légitime, un individu, en voyant un autre dans un état de danger, s'abstient de l'aider, et qu'en conséquence le mal arrive.” — *Traité de Législation*, iii. 97.

If this were law, every person who happened to see a bad rider on a restive horse, and did not help him to dismount, if that rider were afterwards thrown, would be liable to punishment. Query, Would the gout be a legitimate excuse? All the former objections also apply. We subjoin a specimen of the commentary. *Traité de Législation*, iii. p. 109.

“ Pourquoi les délits négatifs en ce genre sont ils rendus punissables comme les délits positifs ?

“ Réponse. Parceque, dans un cas comme dans l'autre, la peine est fondée, elle est efficace, elle est nécessaire.”

This is edifying!

There are many reasons in favour of a code or digest of the entire law, among which may be mentioned the immense mass of our law, and the rapid rate at which it is continually increasing; but to tear up the whole fabric of the law by the roots, intersecting as it does every portion of the most com-

plicated state of society that ever existed, with its minute and interminable fibres; to throw aside a stock of materials for a code, the richest and the most valuable, as all who are acquainted with them will acknowledge, and as Bentham himself acknowledges *, ever possessed by any nation; to substitute instead thereof a few hundred definitions, if we are to judge from the specimens given, trivial or fallacious, or to turn over such a country as England to the tender mercies of some foreigner, ignorant, as comparatively he must be, of our institutions, laws, manners, customs, and national character, is a scheme worthy of the author of "Not Paul, but Jesus," and of him alone.

How far Bentham is entitled to the credit of the recent changes in the law, or whether he is entitled on account of those changes to any credit at all, is a question which it would be idle to discuss, since it cannot be shewn that the law would not have been altered if he had never existed. Evidence is now less rigidly excluded than formerly. Is this owing to the publication of the "*Preuves Judiciaires*?" Of Sir Robert Peel's acts for consolidating the criminal law he has spoken in the most contemptuous terms. But admitting that Bentham has the merit of having drawn public attention to the defects of our laws, it

* *De la Codification*, p. 339.

is quite clear that the adoption of his own system would be a far greater evil than the defects he denounces, since it would leave us in point of fact almost without laws. Neither is it by any means certain that all the recent changes in the law have been improvements; a matter we are as yet far from having sufficient experience to determine. It was recently said by a judge, —

“There are few acts of Parliament which have generated more controversy, and been productive of more litigation, than the statute 21 James I. c. 16, which was passed (as the preamble of it declares) for the purpose of quieting men’s estates, and for the avoiding of suits.” — *Crompton and Jervis’s Reports*, vol. i. p. 7.

Again, new points are continually arising under the statute of frauds, 29 Charles II. c. 3. And though Lord Nottingham said, “every line of that act was worth a subsidy,” there are many who doubt whether on the whole it has not done quite as much evil as good. However, justice undoubtedly may be made cheaper, more certain, and more expeditious; we contend only that to attain such objects is no easy task.

But Bentham cannot see these difficulties. He seems to think that he alone must infallibly succeed where all mankind before him have failed. His proposed laws are such, that we can neither deny

their excellence, nor doubt their construction. And because lawyers are not disposed to recognise these pretensions, he calls them wolves, sharks, — all the hard names he can think of. He charges law, as other writers, equally accurate and equally profound, charge aristocracy, with being the exclusive cause of evils springing rather from the nature of man and the nature of things.

Bentham's mind was totally destitute of imagination, and it may be doubted whether a man thus deficient can be a philosopher. Where imagination has an undue predominance over reason, the mental character, though very different, is also ill calculated for the discovery of truth. But imagination gives grasp to reason: it enables a man to see much where others can see nothing; and to find many and deep meanings in things which have but one, and that trivial, for common eyes.

To the Defence of Usury may be added the treatises on Prison Discipline and Punishments, on the Tactics of Legislative Assemblies, and on Fallacies, as Bentham's best works. He gives some praise in his Tactics to the standing orders of the House of Commons; a very rare occurrence with him in the case of any institution which he found existing. The treatise on Fallacies is ingenious; but, as the Archbishop of Dublin has remarked in the *Encyclopædia Metropolitana*, eminently one-sided. He

gives only the fallacies of the opponents of innovation, not the fallacies of innovators, excepting in his examination of the French declaration of the rights of man.

Such an ardent apostle of change is Bentham, that he will not leave us in undisturbed possession even of our scientific vocabulary. His work on Nomenclature is strikingly characteristic of the thorough system-monger. What Lynceus could recognise his old acquaintance grammar, under the name of "Didactic Cœnesioscopic Nooscopies," or rhetoric, under that of "Pathocinetie Cœnesioscopic Nooscopies?" One merit only these uncouth names possess, that of being equally unintelligible to all classes, learned or unlearned. Bentham does not appear to be very sanguine as to their general adoption, but he thinks he has some chance of getting "Physiurgic Somatology" substituted for natural history, and "Anthropurgic Somatology" for natural philosophy.

In religion we have seen that Bentham is not only an infidel, but a blasphemer; in ethics, by disregarding entirely the motives of actions, he takes away all distinction between right and wrong, and lays down an unattainable principle as the solitary test of good and evil; in politics, he would have annual parliaments, universal suffrage, no established church, and no House of Lords, or

second chamber of any kind * ; in jurisprudence, he would plunge us at once into complete anarchy, by depriving us of all our laws, and substituting for them what in practice would amount to nothing ; in philosophy generally, he is unable to perceive the distinction between moral and mathematical science, and his boasted discoveries are therefore, for the most part, either sophisms, truisms, or mere alterations in the meanings of words ; as an advocate of a system, he is most unjust to opponents, not only intolerant and presumptuous, but grossly abusive ; in fine, to sum up his character, he respects nothing, and would change every thing ; — can then the answer be doubted if we ask is wisdom here ?

If it be thought strange that such a system, and such a man, should ever have obtained a hearing, even from the most limited audience, Bacon and Hooker will explain the cause.

“ If a new sect have not two properties, fear it not ; for it will not spread. The one is the supplanting, or the opposing, of authority established ; for nothing is more popular than that. The other is the giving licence to pleasures and a voluptuous life.” — BACON, — *Of Vicissitude of Things*.

Hooker begins his Ecclesiastical Polity thus : —

“ He that goeth about to persuade a multitude

* See his political pamphlets.

that they are not so well governed as they ought to be, shall never want attentive and favourable hearers; because they know the manifold defects whereunto every kind of regiment is subject, but the secret lets and difficulties, which in public proceedings are innumerable and inevitable, they have not ordinarily the judgment to consider; and because such as openly reprove supposed disorders of state are taken for principal friends to the common benefit of all, and for men that carry singular freedom of mind, under this fair and plausible colour whatsoever they utter passeth for good and current. That which wanteth in the weight of their speech, is supplied by the aptness of men's minds to accept and believe it. Whereas on the other side, if we maintain things that are established, we have not only to strive with a number of heavy prejudices deeply rooted in the hearts of men, who think that herein we serve the time, and speak in favour of the present state, because thereby we either hold or seek preferment, but also to bear such exceptions as minds so averted before-hand usually take against that which they are loth should be poured into them."

Mr. Mill is entitled to far more respect than Bentham, not only because he is a closer reasoner, but because his works are not chargeable with the gross impropriety and want of gentlemanly feeling,

which Bentham constantly manifests in treating philosophical subjects. Mr. Mill's History of British India, though sufficiently dry, and too censorious, is a valuable work, and procured him, I have heard, from the East India Company, unsolicited, the situation which he held at the India House till his death, a fact, if true, equally honorable to both parties. The only portions of Mr. Mill's works we have to consider here are such passages of his Analysis of the Phenomena of the Mind, and of the Essay on Government, as serve to complete the outline of the Utilitarian system.

The Analysis of the Phenomena of the Mind is the book of no common man ; the chapter on Naming in particular is exceedingly ingenious ; the definition of the abstract, " the concrete with the secondary signification dropped," seems to be as correct as it is clear ; but the great defect of the work is, that it does not give the whole state of the case ; throughout, the conviction is forced upon us, that this is not all ; something is perpetually kept back, and we are not satisfied. There is no argument or even express assertion in it in favour of materialism, and yet materialism seems every where to be tacitly assumed. It is natural that the Utilitarian philosophy should be peculiarly prone to materialism ; for materialism is the calling distinct things by the

same name, which, as we have seen, is one of the fundamental errors of Bentham's system. Materialism may, I think, be disproved in the following manner : What is death ? Thus much at least we certainly know, that in respect of the body it is the cessation of the power of feeling, and of the power of moving. As Plato puts it in the *Phædrus* with extreme accuracy,

“ Πάν γὰρ σῶμα ᾧ μὲν ἔξωθεν τὸ κινεῖσθαι, ἄψυχον, ᾧ δὲ ἔνδοθεν αὐτῷ ἔξ αὐτοῦ, ἔμψυχον.”

What is the cause of this phenomenon ? The common answer, let those who object to it give a better if they can, is, the separation of the soul from the body. But we can neither see the soul, nor hear it, nor feel it, nor weigh it, nor measure it. The body we can both see, feel, weigh and measure. If then we apply the same epithet to that which we can see, feel, weigh and measure, and to that which we cannot, and call both material, our language is obviously unphilosophical and incorrect. It may be said this is proving too much, the phenomena at the death of a beast are similar to those at the death of a man, will it be contended that the souls of men and the souls of beasts are alike ? The answer, without going to Revelation, is, that men have a conception and a desire of immortality, and that beasts have never given the slightest evi-

dence of either. But we have no reason whatever for calling even the soul or vital principle of a beast material. As there are distinctions in material, so also there may be in immaterial things. The soul of a man and the soul of a beast may be alike incapable of being subjected to the cognizance of our senses, and yet be widely different from each other. In fact, to suppose them not different is unphilosophical ; because, though some of the phenomena are the same, others are not.*

It is admitted that our ideas of immaterial things are negative, and therefore, according to Mr. Mill, we cannot believe in them. He says, vol. i. p. 275, "there can be no belief in any existence without an idea of that existence." Why not? If this proposition be sound it must destroy all belief. We know nothing of the essences of things, or how they exist; we know them only by their effects,—not as they are in themselves. If we deny that the effects exist, we resist the constant evidence of our senses, and it is a waste of words to argue further. If we admit the effects, we must also admit their

* There is every reason for believing that the faculty of speech does not depend upon the physical organisation of the larynx. Though vocal organs precisely similar to those of man should be discovered in a beast, he would still be incapable of connected discourse.

causes. But here Mr. Mill has a distinction to take. Cause, according to him, means only "the antecedent of a consequent, where the connexion is constant."—vol. i. p. 264. If so, in a string of puppets, where one constantly precedes another, the puppet precedent is the cause of the puppet consequent; at any rate Mr. Mill's definition is completely satisfied. The definition takes a part for the whole. A cause is not only "the antecedent of a consequent, where the connexion is constant," but also the efficient of a consequent, that without which the consequent could not have existed.

We do not mean to accuse Mr. Mill of holding all the conclusions to which these propositions respecting belief and causation lead. Men are inconsistent in such matters; even Locke was not always consistent. But it must not be concealed that these two principles are, if strictly worked out, incompatible with the moral responsibility of man, and the existence of God. If a criminal is the mere antecedent, and not the efficient of a crime, he cannot justly be punished for it; if we cannot believe in any existence without an idea of it, we cannot believe in the existence of God, since of the mode of his existence we have confessedly no idea. We believe in the existence of God for the same reason that we believe in any other existences, from the effects thereby produced; as the Abbé

Galiani said, “*La nature est pipée**,” but we cannot be said to know less of his essence than of the essences of things in general, for we know nothing of any. There can be no degrees in total ignorance. Though “the world be set in man’s heart, yet can he not discern the work which God worketh from the beginning to the end.” We see God indeed “suspending a golden chain from heaven†;” but a few only of the intermediate links thereof are visible to our eyes, for one extremity is lost in the light of his throne, and the other in the darkness of illimitable space.

Mr. Mill confounds the mind with its phenomena. His chapters on consciousness and identity are particularly defective. What is it that is conscious, conceives, imagines, classifies, abstracts, remembers, believes, reasons, reflects? Not my body, for I may lose half my weight by illness, or by amputation of my limbs, and yet afterwards exert all these various faculties as perfectly as before. The sensations of the body and the feelings of the mind are not the same, for the feelings, as Mr. Mill admits, exist after the sensations have ceased; an idea he defines to be “a copy of a sensation,” but a copy must be written upon something; what

* See page 66, ante.

† “*Σειρήν χρυσείην ἐξ οὐρανὸθεν κρεμάσαντα.*”—*Homer.*

is it written upon? Does he really mean to deny the existence of the mind? If so, it is misleading people, to use the word. If a man is not satisfied from internal observation that he has a mind as well as a body, how can he ever be satisfied of any thing? Some things must be taken for granted. "They* that seek a reason of all things do utterly overthrow reason," said Theophrastus. Error is, alas, older than the fable of the Lernæan hydra, with heads more numerous, and more tenacious of life.

Mr. Mill's Essay on Government is founded, he says, "upon the principle that the acts of men will be conformable to their interests." This is the old fallacy again. If by saying that men will act according to their interests, Mr. Mill means that they will do what they please, he enunciates a truism, far too vague to build any system upon, with very superfluous solemnity; if he means that they will act according to their interests rightly understood, we take issue with him on the fact at once. Experience proves the direct contrary. The acts of many men are habitually adverse to their real interests, the acts of none are invariably in conformity with them.

But Mr. Mill does not profess to found his theory on experience. He says,

"Experience, if we look only at the outside of

* "Ἀπάντων ζητοῦντες λόγον ἀναιροῦσι λόγον."

the facts, appears to be divided on this subject. Absolute monarchy, under Neros and Caligulas, under such men as emperors of Morocco and sultans of Turkey, is the scourge of human nature. On the other side, the people of Denmark, tired out with the oppression of an aristocracy, resolved that their king should be absolute ; and, under their absolute monarch, are as well governed as any people in Europe. In Greece, notwithstanding the defects of democracy, human nature ran a more brilliant career than it has ever done in any other age or country."

These facts are inconsistent with Mr. Mill's whole theory, he makes no attempt to reconcile them with it, and until they can be reconciled what is the theory good for? We give it in Mr. Mill's own words :

"The very principle of human nature upon which the necessity of government is founded, the propensity of one man to possess himself of the objects of desire at the cost of another, leads on, by infallible sequence, where power over a community is attained, and nothing checks, not only to that degree of plunder which leaves the members (excepting always the recipients and instruments of plunder) the bare means of subsistence, but to that degree of cruelty which is necessary to keep in existence the most intense terror."

This is a promising picture of human nature indeed! Is there a single period in history when the members of the community generally, excepting only the tools of tyranny, were plundered of every thing but the bare means of subsistence? But, it will be said, something always did check, then the theory falls to the ground, and is worth nothing, because it supposes a state of things never known to exist.

It seems never to strike Mr. Mill that human nature is inconsistent, both in good and evil, that different men desire different things, and that the same men do not always desire the same things. He assumes three propositions, all equally contradicted by experience, that all men are perfectly alike, perfectly consistent, and perfectly wicked. The old tragedian has a better theory :

“*Υβρις φυτεύει τύραννον,
Υβρις, ἣν πολλῶν ὑπερπλησθῆ μάταν.*”

Mr. Mill, as was to be expected, calls the balance of power chimerical. “If there are three powers,” he says, “how is it possible to prevent two of them from combining to swallow up the third?” “There is no point of saturation with the objects of desire.” He seems to look upon monarchy, aristocracy, and democracy as so many simple chemical elements;

each consisting of a certain determinate volume, and always acting according to certain determinate laws.

It is not at all essential to the existence of the balance of power, that the strength of each of the three combining elements should be precisely equal. History shews that in England it has existed for a long period; recent facts shew that it still exists, and also that it oscillates or vibrates from one extreme to another. Thus, at the execution of Charles I., monarchy "flew up and kicked the beam," twelve years afterwards it outweighed aristocracy and democracy combined. Mr. Mill leaves wholly out of consideration the fact that monarchy, aristocracy, and democracy are all frequently inconsistent in their policy with what he considers their respective interests. Kings or their ministers are often in their policy anti-monarchical, some nobles join the court, others the democratic party against their own order, many whose social position would compel them, according to Mr. Mill, to be democrats, side notwithstanding with the crown or the nobles. Of the three powers aristocracy seems, however, to be the least inconsistent as well as the most vigilant.

It may be said that the ultimate seat of power must be somewhere, and according to the theory of the balance its position cannot be determined.

This is another argument in favour of the soundness of that theory. The ultimate seat of power in such a constitution as the British, is constantly shifting, like the sandbanks at the mouth of a great river, under the sway of opposing currents. It depends upon the changeable opinions of a vast number of individuals, some of whom are continually leaving the scene, while others, altogether unlike them, spring up in their place.

With certain qualifications, the responsibility of the governors to the governed is no doubt the only permanent and substantial security for good government. Mr. Mill finds this security where other men do, in the representative system, but his way of determining the numbers of which the elective body should consist is curious. "Each man of the majority, if the majority were constituted the governing body, would have something less than the benefit of oppressing a single man. If the majority were twice as great as the minority, each man of the minority would only have one half the benefit of oppressing a single man. In that case, the benefits of good government, accruing to all, might be expected to overbalance to the several members of such an elective body the benefits of misrule, peculiar to themselves. Good government would, therefore, have a tolerable security." Mr. Mill speaks of the oppression of half a man, as a chemist

would speak of the pressure of half an atmosphere. According to his reasoning, which assumes men to be as unlike what they are as possible, the elective body could not be too large. If it be large, that the majority of electors have a greater interest in good government than in the continuance of abuses, so that their interests are identical with those of the whole community, what ground can there be for extending the suffrage? Any farther extension would be a hazardous experiment to no purpose. The objection to universal suffrage is that it would be a monstrous tyranny, as it would throw the chief power into the hands of the most numerous, that is the lowest and most ignorant class, who would choose for their representatives the men who talked strongest and promised most, and also render society liable to perpetual convulsions, as the expectations of such ignorant depositories of power must inevitably be disappointed.

The elective or representative system has its limits. If we extend it not only to one legislative assembly, but to both, and also, as the Americans have done, to the executive, we throw uncontrolled power into the hands of the majority; and as most men abuse power when they feel they possess it, the result is one of the most galling and hardest to be contended with of all tyrannies. So true is it that all legislation and all government are only a choice of evils, and that if we shrink too far from one

danger we fall into another. The Americans, determined that the responsibility of all the governors to the governed should be complete, threw aside the British constitution, destroyed the balance of monarchy, aristocracy and democracy, mutually checking each other, and the consequence is they enjoy much less freedom of thought and action than we do. Their tyranny of the majority is in some respects worse, because more constant and systematic, than the democratic tyrannies of Athens and Florence, where the representative system was not introduced.

Of the advocates of the exclusive principle of utility, Mr. Austin is by far the ablest, and, as a natural consequence, the least dogmatic. His "Province of Jurisprudence determined," like all the works of the Utilitarians I have seen, though a valuable, is a crabbed book; they follow the Epicureans not only in substance but in manner and form, as if a dry style necessarily implied the "dry light" of Bacon. Our present object is not to examine Mr. Austin's entire work, but to notice such passages only as appear to relate to the peculiar tenets of his sect.

In his preface, page xiii, Mr. Austin uses an expression which, we may observe incidentally, is very liable to misinterpretation:—

"Laws coming from God, or from the intelligent

and rational nature, which is the soul and guide of the universe."

What does this mean? God is omnipresent, but to call him the soul of the universe is surely something very like pantheism.

At page 7, Mr. Austin thus gives his notion of duty :—

" Being liable to evil from you, if I comply not with a wish which you signify, I am *bound* or *obliged* by your command, or I lie under a *duty* to obey it."

Mr. Austin seems to depart somewhat from the established meanings of words, when he speaks of command and duty as correlative terms. Duty, as a motive of actions, implies not merely the fear of offending, but the disinterested desire of pleasing, and also gratitude for benefits received. He is right in separating from it the hope of reward.

" When ye have done all that is required of you, say we are unprofitable servants, we have done that which it was our duty to do."

The theory of a moral sense is not fairly stated.

" There are human actions which all mankind approve, human actions which all men disapprove ; and these universal sentiments arise at the thought of those actions, spontaneously, instantly, and inevitably. Being common to all mankind, and inse-

parable from the thoughts of those actions, these sentiments are marks or signs of the Divine pleasure. They are proofs that the actions which excite them are enjoined or forbidden by the Deity.

“ The rectitude or pravity of human conduct, or its agreement or disagreement with the laws of God, is instantly inferred from these sentiments, without the possibility of mistake.” pp. 33, 34.

If there be any writer who has thus claimed for a moral sense what cannot be claimed for any thing human, infallibility, Mr. Austin should have told us who he is. We believe that the moral sense may be mistaken, may be perverted, may be seared by a long course of wickedness, that it is naturally imperfect, like all our faculties, and requires cultivation; but still that it does exist, teaching us that there are actions which it is wrong to do, though men may differ materially as to what those actions are. If there be no moral sense, on what did Aristotle and Cicero found their systems of ethics? How did they arrive at them? Not certainly by the exclusive principle of utility, for they do not admit it, and yet their systems leave little to be added by Utilitarians. This is a question the Utilitarians are bound to answer, because, unless something can be done by their principle which was not done before, it is no discovery.

It will be observed, that though Mr. Austin's

exposition of the principle of utility may be substantially the same with Bentham's, it is very differently worded, and based upon a very different foundation.

“The benevolence of God, with the principle of general utility, is our only index or guide to his unrevealed law.

“God designs the happiness of all his sentient creatures. Some human actions forward that benevolent purpose, or their tendencies are beneficent or useful. Other human actions are adverse to that purpose, or their tendencies are mischievous or pernicious. The former, as promoting his purpose, God has enjoined. The latter, as opposed to his purpose, God has forbidden. He has given us the faculty of observing; of remembering; of reasoning: and, by duly applying those faculties, we may collect the tendencies of our actions. Knowing the tendencies of our actions, and knowing his benevolent purpose, we know his tacit commands.” pp. 35, 36.

The theory of utility then, according to Mr. Austin, is to be deduced, not as Bentham deduces it, from the desire of pleasure, and the dread of pain, but from the presumed benevolence of the Deity. This presumption is something too bold. How know we that God is what we call benevolent? Are we even agreed universally among ourselves as

to what benevolence is? In speaking on such a subject, let us remember that "He is above, and we upon earth, wherefore it behoveth our words to be wary and few." * How will the Utilitarians reconcile this passage of Scripture with their theory?

"I form the light, and create darkness; I make peace, and create evil; I the Lord do all these things."

What would, and what would not, be benevolence in the Deity, we do not and cannot know. Such knowledge is incompatible with our finite and imperfect nature. When Mr. Austin says, "God desires the happiness of all his sentient creatures," he makes an assertion too broad to be proved. We know that many sentient creatures frequently suffer pain, and in the case of animals, that suffering can seldom if ever, and in the case of men not always, be traced to faults of their own. Mr. Austin, like all the Utilitarians, leaves out of consideration the important point, that the earth is "cursed," and this life a state of trial, a state obviously inconsistent with that happiness which he supposes to be designed, although never completely attained; forgetting, that on any other assumption the marks of design, which must be discoverable in morals as well as in physics, would become very faint and

obscure. Happiness rather than misery seems to be the general, though not the universal object of the divine laws, (if it were the universal, where the power of the law-giver is infinite, misery could not exist,) so far as this world is concerned. More cannot well be said without touching on the question of the origin of evil, which had better not be alluded to, since it cannot be explained.

How then can the exclusive principle of utility possibly be sound, when its very foundation fails; and even if it did not, how entirely is the vast analysis of all the tendencies of all human actions which it requires, beyond and above the capacity of man!

But, says Mr. Austin, "if utility be our only index to the tacit commands of the Deity, it is idle to object its imperfections."* No doubt; but the Utilitarians have not proved that it is the only index. They have not even proved its superiority to beauty as such an index. Neither have they proved that there are any tacit commands of the Deity which cannot be inferred from the Bible. Mr. Austin may have demonstrated that the principle of utility, supposing it generally received, would be the ultimate, not the proximate test of our conduct, though even to this position he admits

* Page 45.

there may be exceptions; but against the grand difficulty, the impossibility of making the requisite analysis, he has not advanced a single step.

Mr. Austin does not attempt to conceal this difficulty, and acknowledges that it "scarcely admits of a solution that will perfectly satisfy the mind." p. 61. It is a satisfaction to turn from the dogmatism of Bentham to a reasoner who can look at two sides of a question.

Mr. Austin's first answer to the objection is, that ethics are a science, "formed through a long succession of ages, by many and separate contributions from many and separate discoverers. No single mind could explore the whole of the field, though each of its numerous departments has been explored by numerous inquirers."

Is this the fact? Mr. Austin has endeavoured to anticipate objections to this answer, but he has omitted the most important. The analogy he contends for between ethics and the mathematical and physical sciences, fails in this, that ethics cannot be shewn to be progressive. Almost all, if not absolutely all the improvements made in ethics since the days of Aristotle and Cicero are derived from revelation. Mr. Austin would, perhaps, give religious toleration as an exception, but toleration rather belongs to the science of government than to ethics; as far as it forms a portion of private

morality, it is included in the precept, which indeed might be interpreted without violence to apply to every case, private or public, "Do unto others as ye would that they should do unto you." And this boasted principle of toleration, on the strength of which so many assume so much, is but too often a mere cloak for indifference. If it be true, as I think it is, that religion and ethics are not progressive, while the science of government and political economy are, it is a most remarkable fact, fatal to the exclusive principle of utility, and triumphant for a moral sense. It is remarkable also, that the heathen poet, whose morality is purer and loftier than any other, and who lived, be it remembered, a century before Aristotle, Sophocles, is also the poet whose belief in a moral sense seems to have been the most firm. What can be found nobler, even among Christian moralists, than these lines !

“ Ἐγὼ μοι συνείη φέροντι
 μοῦρα τὰν εὐσεπτον ἀγνείαν λόγων,
 ἔργων τε πάντων, ὧν νόμοι πρόκεινται
 ὑψίποδες, ὠρανίαν δι’ αἰθέρα
 τεκνωθέντες, ὧν Ὀλυμπος
 πατὴρ μόνος, οὐδέ νιν θνατὰ
 φύσις ἀνέρων ἔτικτεν, οὐδὲ
 νιν ποτε λάθᾳ κατακοιμάσει·
 μέγας ἐν τούτοις Θεὸς,
 οὐδὲ γηράσκει.” *

* Oh that fate would grant me a reverential purity of all my

This is indeed, in the words of Scripture, "shewing the work of the law written on the heart."

At page 70 Mr. Austin says, "want and labour spring from the niggardliness of nature, and not from the inequality which is consequent on the institution of property." Is this consistent with the presumed and unqualified divine benevolence on which he raises his theory? The phrase "niggardliness of nature," which means niggardliness of the Deity, is highly objectionable. For creatures of such limited knowledge and capacity, as comparatively we are, to predicate benevolence or niggardliness of a Being who is infinite in all his attributes, is insufferable arrogance. Have we any standard whereby to measure the actions of God? When will men learn that "the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom?"

"If," says Mr. Austin, "there were a reading public, numerous, discerning, and *impartial*, the science of ethics, and all the various sciences which are nearly related to ethics, would advance with unexampled rapidity." p. 81. What witch told him that? Surely Mr. Austin will not confound him-

words and deeds, over which rule the laws sublime, the offspring of heavenly air, of which Olympus is alone the progenitor, nor did the mortal nature of man produce them, nor shall oblivion ever lull them to sleep! God is great in these things, and doth not grow old.

self with the quacks who look upon education as a specific for all human ills.

“ The tree of knowledge is not that of life.”*

We find at length that the exclusive principle of utility has no advantage whatever, even supposing it demonstrated, over a moral sense. As an index to the will of the Deity, it is confessedly imperfect and uncertain. “ His laws are signified obscurely to those upon whom they are binding, and are subject to inevitable and involuntary misconstruction.” p. 85. Can less be said for a moral sense? Mr. Austin defends the acknowledged imperfection of the principle of utility from analogy, why will he not allow the same analogy to hold good in favour of a moral sense? One of these adverse theories he says is certainly true. Be it so; but what necessity is there for totally excluding the other? “ There is in rectitude beauty†,” and also utility; why may there not be something in it more than either? We say that revelation distinctly asserts the existence of a moral sense, and we contend that revelation on such a point is conclusive, for the case is wholly different from that of physics; the inspired writers touched on physical subjects but incidentally, and spoke to be understood; to explain the system of the universe

* Byron.

† Hooker.

was not their object; their business was with man as a responsible being. But, to abandon this high ground, let us place the two theories side by side, omitting that of beauty, which Mr. Austin ought not to have done, and test them by the crucial experiment; we shall find that the theory of a moral sense will explain phenomena which that of utility alone will not.

What I understand by a moral sense I have already said, ante p. 185; on such a point each man must speak for himself; with what others may understand by it I have no concern. But surely Mr. Austin can nowhere have found expressions to justify him in calling it "instinctive," since it may be improved and may be deteriorated, which, as far as we know, instincts cannot, or at least are not. Birds build their nests precisely as they have been always accustomed to do.

But we have promised a crucial instance. The case put by Mr. Austin himself will furnish one.

"That *you* should feel remorse if you kill in an attempt to rob, and should not be affected with remorse if you kill a murderous robber, is a difference which I readily account for without the supposition of an instinct." (He has no right to call it instinct.) "The law of your country distinguishes the cases, and the current morality of your country accords with the law." p. 98.

Neither of Mr. Austin's explanations will adequately account for his own fact. The prohibitions of the law natural, as murder, robbery, are generally respected; the prohibitions of the law of the country only, as smuggling, poaching, are very little respected. Why is this? But where does the current morality of the country come from? Not from revelation only, for it is older, unless it be the revelation spoken of by Sophocles in the passage quoted, which is but another name for a moral sense. If Mr. Austin should say it was discovered by the principle of utility, he is without evidence to prove his assertion, and in such a case morality, as a science at least, would certainly be progressive. Allowing their utmost weight to his explanations, still there is a residuum of the phenomenon unaccounted for.

It is not candid in Mr. Austin to expect so much more from a moral sense than he does from his own principle of utility. There is no analogy between a moral sense and hunger or thirst. To say that "all the parts of our nature which are ultimate, or incapable of analysis, are certain and distinct, as well as inscrutable*," is a very venturous assertion, very easy to make, and very hard to prove. Nothing merely mental can be as distinct to us as what is

present to our senses. The utilitarians cannot see that the evidence for moral and physical truths is not, and cannot be, of the same nature.

Mr. Austin does but beat the air when he contends that the moral sentiments of all men are not precisely alike. Who says they are? But he omits to give the reason why the moral sentiments of all men are not more alike, which is, that men will not consult the light that is in them. Each man may find out what is right and what is wrong for himself if he chooses, without depending upon long inductions, made from extensive collections of facts in the various branches of ethics, by many philosophers, in many ages and countries. But who are the men who have treated ethics after this fashion? Let the utilitarians name them.

“The promptitude and decision,” says Mr. Austin, “with which we judge of actions are impertinent to the matter in question: for our moral sentiments would be prompt and inevitable, although they arose from a perception of utility, or although they were impressed upon our minds by the authority of our fellow men.” p. 105. This is a point which Mr. Austin cannot prove. If we had to learn what was right and wrong, just as we have to learn chemistry, for instance, men would be as much puzzled to know what to do in those sudden emergencies, dissimilar to all their previous experience,

which occur sometimes to most of us, as an experimental chemist is perplexed by the sudden appearance of unexpected phenomena. Let a man study ethics and political economy with equal attention. It is probable that he will find himself called upon to put in practice some principles of political economy quite as frequently as some of the higher principles of ethics; yet the latter, I think, will recur to his mind with much greater rapidity than the former.

It was never meant by the phrase "moral sense" to debar reason from exercising its due influence over the mind. The case is similar to that of reason and imagination, which are distinct faculties, mutually acting upon each other. The compositions of a poet who has a vivid imagination and a feeble reason want propriety, just as those of a prose writer who is without imagination want grasp and depth. Reason is the governing or imperial faculty of the mind, but it is not the only one.

At page 107, Mr. Austin flatters himself he has put us into a cleft stick, which one might suppose he had borrowed for the occasion from Mr. Mill's workshop; so strong is the family resemblance to the logical weapons there manufactured.

"Assuming that moral sentiments are instinctive or inevitable, they are either different with different men, or they are alike with all men. To affirm

‘that they are alike with all men,’ is merely to hazard a bold assertion contradicted by notorious facts. If they are different with different men, it follows that God has not set to men a *common* rule. If they are different with different men, there is no *common* test of human conduct: there is no test by which one man may try the conduct of another.”

The truth is men differ in their moral sentiments, not because the light within them is different in kind, but because, like all our other faculties of mind or body, as imagination, reason, strength, beauty, it is different in degree in different men, and also because men differ greatly in the attention with which they cultivate it and listen to its dictates.

In “the plain and glaring fact” stated by Mr. Austin at page 108, we entirely agree. “With regard to actions of a few classes, the moral sentiments of most, though not of all men, have been alike. But, with regard to other classes, their moral sentiments have differed, through every shade or degree, from slight diversity to direct opposition.” Now surely the theory of a moral sense, such as it has been stated, is a much simpler mode of accounting for the “general resemblance, with infinite variety, in the systems of law and morality which have actually obtained in the world,” than that of utility alone, requiring an analysis which it cannot be shewn that any one man ever

went through in any one instance, or even attempted, before Bentham, whose failure is utterly ludicrous.

It is strange Mr. Austin should not see the worthlessness of the exclusive principle of utility, when he finds that "of the writers who maintain and impugn it, three out of four fall into errors." p. 112. It is quite clear, on his own shewing, that the being easily attained or understood is not one of its merits. Mr. Austin himself has not confounded the motive with the measure or test of conduct, but Bentham most certainly has.*

Mr. Austin may be right in saying that his "theory of utility has no necessary connection with any theory of motives." It is a most dangerous theory, and most liable to be perverted, nevertheless. By the word dangerous, we do not mean dangerous to existing institutions, as Bentham chose to misunderstand Lord Loughborough, when he applied that epithet to his theory, but dangerous, because it tends to debase and corrupt mankind, which was probably Lord Loughborough's real meaning. For the utilitarians there are no mysteries, and, perhaps consequently, no reverence. How inconsistent is their scientific affectation of impartiality in considering moral questions, with the scriptural doctrine of hatred of sin and love of righteousness! We can discern too, lurking in their perpetual

* Ante, pp. 154, 155.

confusion of moral and physical evidence, Hume's fatal fallacy of particular experience as the sole test of universal truth ; one of the most pernicious errors ever invented by the perverse ingenuity of man, and to which St. Peter anticipated the answer, at the same time that he foretold the coming of that numerous family of scoffers, who have vexed Christianity in these latter days. Would that such men might be persuaded to apply to themselves the words of that great writer *, so often quoted, who is to our divines what Shakspeare is to our poets, or Bacon to our philosophers! " They which sit at continual ease, and are settled in the lees of their security, look upon them, view their countenance, their speech, their gesture, their deeds : ' put them in fear, O God,' saith the prophet, ' that so they may know themselves to be but men,' worms of the earth, dust and ashes, frail, corruptible, feeble things."

* Hooker, Sermon IV.

OF IMAGINATION AND FANCY HUMOUR
AND WIT.

From thy wardrobe bring thy chiefest treasure,
Not those new fangled toys, and trimming slight
Which takes our late fantasticks with delight ;
But cull those richest robes, and gay'st attire,
Which deepest spirits and choicest wits desire.

Milton to his native language.

THE relation of fancy and wit has been often remarked. It is indeed so striking that the same definition will suit both, with the change only of a single adjective ; wit consisting in the discovery of a ludicrous, and fancy of a beautiful resemblance between things apparently unlike. In both there is always a comparison expressed or implied, and whenever there is a want of propriety in that comparison, the unsuccessful attempt at either wit or fancy degenerates into oddity or a conceit ; of which last abundant examples may be found in the Euphuists and the Concettisti, Sir Philip Sidney or Marino. Wit and fancy often run into each other, and mutually intrude upon their respective provinces, so that it is sometimes hard to determine, on meeting with a comparison of peculiar liveliness,

whether it should be styled witty or fanciful, and thus it happens that both epithets are occasionally applied to the same expression indiscriminately.

Wit occupies the same subordinate position, with respect to the higher or inventive species of humour, that fancy holds with respect to inventive imagination; but wit would seem to be a higher quality than the lower or narrative species of humour, while the inferiority of fancy to the lower or verbal imagination is manifest. We come now to the question of the nature of imagination and humour, and the distinction between imagination and fancy, humour and wit.

Of imagination there appear to be two kinds. The first, which we have called inventive, does not mean an agreeable combination of fictitious occurrences, termed a story, for this is simply invention, but a delineation of scenes, not in accordance with the common course of nature, so vivid as to produce on the reader or spectator, (for it applies to painting as well as to poetry,) the temporary impression of their reality; and a conception of supernatural beings so definite, as to satisfy the reader, (this last being the province of the poet only, as the painter can describe but a momentary scene,) that such beings, conceding their existence, might with perfect propriety think, act and speak as the author has represented them. Of this species

of poetical imagination, Homer's Tartarus in the *Odyssey*, great part of the *Inferno* of Dante, the two first books of the *Paradise Lost*, the fairies and witches of Shakspeare, and the Mephistopheles of Goethe are among the most striking instances. The last Judgment and the Sybils and Prophets of Michael Angelo, and the Transfiguration and Madonna di San Sisto of Raphael are equally remarkable instances of pictorial imagination ; although, as one half only of one kind of imagination can be predicated of painting, it cannot in strictness be termed more than a semi-imaginative art.

The second kind of imagination, for the sake of distinction, rather than from any peculiar propriety in the term, may be termed expressive or verbal. As it is the suggestion to the mind of an indistinct image personified, it involves comparison, and is therefore all that fancy is, and something more ; for fancy, as we have seen, is a peculiar kind of comparison of things apparently unlike, without personification.

Thus we obtain a test whereby the presence of this second species of imagination, one of the most essential elements of the poetical character, can generally be discovered. The distinction is, however, somewhat subtle, and can hardly be made perfectly clear without illustrations.

Homer, like most poets of the south, has more fancy than verbal imagination. In inventive ima-

gination no man ever excelled him; but this is beside our present purpose. His similies are almost always merely fanciful, but he is nevertheless occasionally highly imaginative, as in his description of *Εἶρις*, or strife:—

“ Η' τ' ὀλίγη μὲν πρῶτα κορύσσεται, αὐτὰρ ἔπειτα
Οὐρανῷ ἐστήριξε κάρη, καὶ ἐπὶ χθονὶ βαίνει.”

Here the whole of the second line is imaginative, and the words *ὀλίγη* and *κορύσσεται* in the first. The impression on the reader's mind is that of a grand, increasing, indistinct image. In the fine description of Apollo in the first *Iliad* the only imaginative expression is, “ *δ δ' ἥϊε νυκτὶ εἰοικώς*,” “he went like night,” that is silently. But the personification of night is faint; her only attributes are motion, darkness, and silence.

There are two finely imaginative lines in the *Hippolytus* of Euripides, which may be noticed for their striking resemblance to the scriptural expression, “The stone shall *cry* out of the wall, and the beam out of the timber shall *answer* it,”

“ Οὐδὲ σκότον φρίσσουσι τὸν ξυνεργάτην,
τέρεμνά τ' οἴκων, μή ποτε φθογγὴν ἀφῇ.”

Here there is a double personification, first of darkness as a co-operator or conspirer with the wicked, and afterwards of the beams of the houses, witnesses

of their crimes, and feeling such horror at them, as to be almost enabled to speak and reveal them.

The finest passage on darkness I remember is in the book of Job : —

“ A land of darkness as darkness itself, and of *the shadow of death without any order*, and where the light is as darkness.”

Here darkness and light are both dimly personified, but the grandest personification is that of death, of whom we are only told that he has a vast shadow, which is without shape.

The following line of Virgil is imaginative, if correct, —

“ Aut *conjurato* descendens Dacus ab Istro ;”

but as it is not quite clear who the Danube conspired with, Claudian’s imitation is finer : —

“ O nimium dilecte Deo, cui militat æther,
Et *conjurati* veniunt ad classica venti.”

Again, the last two lines of the following passage are imaginative, —

“ Felix qui potuit rerum cognoscere causas,
Atque metus omnes et inexorabile fatum
Subjecit pedibus, *strepitumque Acherontis avari*.”

Thus nobly rendered by Sir Arthur Gorges,

“ Happy is he that knows the cause of things,
And that with dauntless courage treads upon
All fear and fate, relentless threatenings,
And greedy throat of roaring Acheron.”

And, perhaps, imitated by Calderon in *El Magico Prodigioso* : —

“ Cadaveres, que encierra
La avarienta codicia de la tierra.”

The happiest use of the image of death or the grave, personified as a devouring monster, is made in the following scriptural passage : —

“ Who enlargeth his desire as hell, and is as death, and cannot be *satisfied, but gathereth unto him all nations, and heapeth unto him all people.*”

Shelley has a very grand image of the same kind,

“ Thou unreplenished lamp, whose narrow fire
 Is shaken by the wind, and on whose edge
Devouring darkness hovers.”

Imaginative personifications are by no means always gloomy, as the following splendid instance from Shakspeare proves : —

“ *For now sits expectation in the air,
 Hiding a sword from hilts unto the point
 With crowns imperial.*”

Another instance from the most imaginative of our prose writers, Sir Thomas Browne, is the more remarkable, as a spirit is seldom illustrated by a cheerful image : —

“ In a word conceive light *invisible*, and that is a spirit.”

The blending of imagination and fancy has an exquisite effect, as in *Romeo and Juliet* : —

“ Her beauty *hangs* upon the *cheek* of night,
Like a rich jewel in an Ethiop’s ear.”

Here the first line is a double personification of beauty and night ; the second line is a fanciful comparison of beauty personified to a jewel, and night to an Ethiop : thus Shelley,

“ And gray walls moulder round, on which *dull* time
Feeds, like slow fire upon a hoary brand.”

Time here is first personified, and afterwards compared to slow fire. Again, says the same great poet in a passage altogether worthy of Shakspeare, and singularly resembling his style : —

“ His words, like arrows
Which *know* no aim beyond the archer’s wit,
Strike sometimes what eludes philosophy.”

Here words are personified as striking, and at the same time compared to arrows. One more passage from this, the most imaginative of English poets since Milton, we shall quote, because it ascribes an unusual number of properties to the personified image : —

“ It is a garish, broad, and *peering* day,
Loud, light, *suspicious*, full of eyes and ears ;
And every little corner, nook and hole,
Is penetrated with the *insolent* light.”

It is not necessary to illustrate fancy at such length. The following instance from Tasso is purely fanciful, —

“ Argo non mai, non vide Cipro o Delo,
D’abito o di beltà forme sì care ;
D’auro ha la chioma, ed or dal bianco velo
Traluce involta, or discoperta appare ;
Cosi qualor si rasserena il cielo,
Dalla candida nube il sol traspare,
Or dalla nube uscendo, i raggi intorno
Piu chiari spiega, e ne raddoppia il giorno.”

In the next illustration from Shakspeare, the beauty of the comparison is greatly heightened by a slight intermingling of pathos : —

“ But he his own affections’ counsellor
Is to himself—so secret and so close,
So far from sounding and discovery,
As is the bud bit with an envious worm,
Ere he can spread his sweet leaves to the air,
Or dedicate his beauty to the sun.”

The last line is also imaginative. The pathos is deeper in that most touching and picturesque verse of Isaiah, but there is no imagination : —

“ And it shall be that as a wandering bird cast out of the nest, so the daughters of Moab shall be at the fords of Arnon.”

The distinction between what we have called inventive and narrative humour, and between nar-

rative humour and wit, is less easily determined. Inventive humour may be confined to the conception of ludicrous characters, definite, marked, consistent with themselves, and maintaining amidst their absurdity and extravagance a certain propriety of demeanour, which rarely stoops to buffoonery. Of this species of humour Don Quixote and Sancho Panza, poetry and prose, Falstaff, and the giant Margutte of Pulci, are among the best examples. Margutte is less known than he deserves to be, for Pulci's very original poem, unfortunately not free from indecency and profaneness, is exceedingly difficult, from the numerous idiomatic expressions and proverbs introduced in it, and the poet's extraordinary command of his rich Tuscan tongue. Margutte is the antenatal impersonation of a French philosophe and esprit fort of the eighteenth century, and more good-humoured.

The inferior species of humour is a simple feeling of the ludicrous. It may be both scenic and narrative; but as the latter epithet seems to include the former, we have termed it narrative only. In narrative humour comparison is rather implied than expressed, in wit there is invariably comparison; but as that comparison is frequently far from obvious, the difficulty of distinguishing in such cases between humour and wit, and of determining under which head particular expressions should be classed

becomes considerable, as the distinction between a comparison implied, and one which though expressed is not obvious, is exceedingly minute.

As instances of the difficulty of making the distinction, we may mention Cowper's John Gilpin, and Portia's description of her suitors in the Merchant of Venice. John Gilpin is purely humorous, yet there is an implied comparison of a good and a bad rider throughout. There does not seem, however, to be any comparison in the ludicrous direction of Mrs. Gilpin to the postboy, to stop three doors off, "lest all should say that she was proud." Portia characterising the various absurdities of her lovers, compares them impliedly to Bassanio, who is essentially a gentleman, the conception is therefore humorous, but the execution for the most part witty, abounding in ludicrous similes. Shakspeare thus blends wit and humour in the same manner as he has blended imagination and fancy; there is, indeed, no poet or author whatever whose excellencies are at once so numerous and so complex.

The often-quoted expression of Voltaire on the execution of Admiral Byng, "De temps en temps tuer un amiral pour *encourager* les autres," is witty. The wit consists in the unexpected introduction of the word "*encourager*," which suggests a ludicrous comparison with the ordinary mode of encouraging

naval merit. The witty retort of Beatrice to the Messenger, in "Much Ado about Nothing," is of the same kind.

"*Mess.* I see, lady, the gentleman is not in your books.

Beat. No: an he were, I would *burn my study.*"

Humour cannot be so well illustrated by quotations as wit, for it is less concentrated, and may pervade the whole of a long narrative. Quotations illustrating the distinction between humour and wit are, indeed, insipid without the context, because in this case the lustre of the gem depends much upon the setting, the flower is delicate, and often withers on transplanting, circumstances of time and place entering largely into the composition both of wit and humour. Painting may be, and often is, humorous, but can never be witty, because wit requires a succession of ideas, and succession is beyond the province of painting. Wit in society is less common than humour, for a humorous impression may be conveyed without effort in the simplest phrases; wit requiring comparison is more far-fetched, and demands more thought. Wit is the keener, colder, and more polished quality; humour the more gentle, arch, and amiable, for the subject of humour is man, it is essentially personal; wit treats with the same indifference of persons and things. Of men possessing great wit with little or

no humour, Butler and Byron are among the most remarkable instances; Hudibras is even tiresome from the want of humour. Wit is the more brilliant, humour the more interesting quality. The wit of Cervantes is less prominent than that of Butler, but Don Quixote abounds with humour of both kinds in every page, and this is one of the reasons why it is so much more interesting than Hudibras. There is in humour much of the milk of human kindness; it implies sympathy even with the ridiculous. A bad man may be witty, but can scarcely be humorous.

The subject might be pursued much farther, but, perhaps, enough has been said to point out the distinction. This slight analytical sketch may not be uninteresting to those, who, loving and honouring the works of the great literary artists, like sometimes to turn from the magnificent and brilliant effects to the examination of their tessellated and intertangled causes, and who feel some hesitation even in this mechanical age in agreeing with the profound Bentham, that poetry is as unprofitable as the "*jeu d'èpingles*."

OF THE ADVANTAGES OF LIVING IN STIRRING TIMES.

La disunione della plebe e del Senato Romano fece libera e potente quella reppublica.

Machiavelli.

WE hear little in these days of the old pedantic classification of the golden, silver and iron ages of literature. The truism, “*omnes aureæ ætatis scriptores non aurei*,” needs no argument; modern criticism has gone farther, and discovered that even an iron age has its gold. Admitting, however, what it would be vain to deny, that there is a decided superiority in the works, whether of literature, science or art, of some periods over those of others, it does not therefore follow that there was an essential difference in the amount of intellectual power which existed in the world at any two given periods. We see a difference in the results, but that difference may, in part at least, be ascribed to the more or less propitious disposition of circumstances, operating favourably or unfavourably upon individuals, according to the adjustment of their characters thereto; as well as to an excess or diminution of the aggregate of mental endowments parcelled out by

nature at distinct periods among equal masses of mankind. We can certainly trace the influence of circumstances in all human productions: there is no man, however great or original, of whom we can safely say that he would not have been made greater or less by being transplanted out of his own into another age.

Our idea of the force of circumstances grows upon us, when we consider what apparently trivial occurrences often cause an entire change in a man's character and life. Yet, it would be false and dangerous to say that men are therefore absolutely the creatures of circumstances; all who have observed children know that character shews itself from the earliest dawn of intellect, and the different influence of facts, often partially or apparently, but seldom entirely the same, confirms the idiosyncrasy of each individual. Every man is in himself a microcosm, not one of a genus, but a species, distinct from all others; nevertheless, the entire amount of mental power distributed among men at various periods may be nearly equal, though susceptible in the distribution of indefinite inequality. It does not follow that different ages are unequal in mental powers, because individuals are.

"I cannot," says Gibbon, "reflect without pleasure on the bounty of nature, which cast my birth in a free and civilised country, in an age of science

and philosophy, in a family of honourable rank, and decently endowed with the gifts of fortune." There is a fine spirit in this remark, and yet it is perhaps rather the sentiment of a scholar than of a philosopher, of a man who delighted more in "lettered leisure" than to seek truth through good and evil. Tranquillity is a fine thing, but it may be loved too well. Men whose passions are feebler than their intellects are ungratefully impatient of an age of experiment, forgetting how much they are indebted for their generalisations to the abundant supply of facts, which might perhaps have been wire drawn through centuries, crowded into the space of a few years, and furnished them by the very activity they denounce. The love of tranquillity is in the first instance the result of temperament; bitterness is often superadded from another cause. The man of action, finding it an obvious and agreeable course of proceeding to despise what he does not readily understand, ridicules the pursuits of the contemplative man as frivolous; the latter retorts, not without some show of reason, that the objects of the busy blusterer are at least equally frivolous; but the world is against him, for the world has neither leisure nor capacity to understand his argument. Hence that unphilosophical zeal against the zealous, partly springing from a consciousness of unjust treatment, partly from mortified vanity, sometimes observable

in men who have never betrayed zeal in any other cause. Had Gibbon lived now, he would probably have been, like Goethe, a conservative; both because he would not have anticipated much benefit to mankind from political changes, and because revolutions would have put him out of his way. The heart and not the head is the source of men's opinions on vital points. Gibbon hated Christianity, not because he was convinced of its falsehood, but because he felt that it was a religion of ardent emotions, because it had destroyed that ancient and beautiful faith, which peopled with "forms of things unknown" every fountain and tree. Goethe loved to think, his age was an age of action, he was thus apparently in a false position; imaginative, he loved the magnificence of courts, his age desired freedom, which has at all times a stern countenance.

It is remarkable that of those, who either in literature, the fine arts, or science, have exercised the most extensive empire over men's minds, by far the greater number lived either in or immediately after times of political or religious convulsion. Such were the ages of Pericles, and Demosthenes, of Cicero, Horace, and Tacitus, of Dante, of Ariosto, Raphael and Michael Angelo, of Cervantes, Shakspeare and Bacon, of Milton, Newton and Locke. These moral tempests cannot therefore be unfavourable to contemplation; on the contrary, they

feed it with facts. There is an analogy between our intellectual and physical wants. The mind like the body must languish without food and exercise. No work of any value was ever produced by a hermit. It may be said that it is easy for an inventive mind to suggest to itself facts in inexhaustible variety, and to draw conclusions from them almost as profitable as those of actual experience; but such facts want life, a deficiency not to be supplied. Our minds are not large enough to deduce principles from supposed facts; besides, facts which seem probable to one man are absurd to another; thus all works of fiction sin more or less against probability, and yet, as it has been often said, truth is stranger still. We cannot even foresee all the bearings of one fact; so in our own time there have been many and important changes in the laws, and the results have never been precisely what was previously anticipated. The moral government of the world is an inexplicable problem. The sum of these speculations is briefly this; revolutionary times open new chapters in the book of man's nature, and present it in a greater variety of aspects, they therefore increase our knowledge; but we cannot be wise *à priori*, without knowledge; therefore from increased knowledge commonly, though not necessarily flows increased wisdom.

But we have the experience of the generations

who have gone before us recorded in history; the answer to this is, that it is scarcely possible to know the whole truth in any transaction in which many men were concerned, particularly if it be long past; and that, as contemporary history necessarily excites a more vivid interest in men than that in which they could not have been actors, it is therefore more suggestive of thought. It is only from the mental ferment produced by the combination of real interest in the facts, and an accurate knowledge of them, that the stream of philosophical reflection can vigorously and purely flow. From this deficiency of interest it happens that ages, like individuals, seldom gain experience by deputy.

It appears, therefore, that stirring times are not unfavourable to our intellectual education, and still less are they to our moral. "In the drama of human life," says Lord Bacon, "it is only for God and angels to be spectators." Action then is our province, provided always that we do not suffer it to absorb us so entirely as to stifle contemplation. Each of the two sisters in Dante would have gained by borrowing from the other :

" Per piacermi allo specchio qui m'adorno :

Ma mia suora Rachèl mai non si smaga

Dal suo miraglio, e siede tutto il giorno.

Ell' è de suoi begli occhi veder vaga,

Com' io dell' adornarmi con le mani ;

Lei lo vedere, e me l'ovrare appaga."

Men are not sent into the world to slumber at their posts, but to be tried,—to develope all the energies of their several characters in their utmost extent. Accordingly, when questions are afloat which excite a deep interest in all classes of society, questions of religion or politics, men shew what they are, and the results are intellectual and moral greatness, both in word and deed, accompanied frequently it must be owned, with crimes, which, however, do not denote so depraved and corrupted a state of the public mind as the vices of more polished and tranquil ages. Neither is such a state of things at all incompatible with the cultivation of the domestic virtues, as the beautiful characters of Mrs. Hutchinson and Lady Fanshawe bear witness. Men must have both employment and excitement. If their age is dead to religion, and a despotic government shuts out politics, vice becomes the only resource of the great majority of those who are not compelled to earn their bread by the sweat of their brows. The love of art, which the idiosyncrasy of artists might propose as a substitute, is a stimulus far too feeble and too limited in its range. Hence the subjects of despotic governments, where no counter-acting cause intervened, have always been peculiarly vicious. Never probably was profligacy so universal as in Rome under the emperors, and during the later times of modern Venice. Under the military des-

potisms of northern Europe at the present day, a variety of causes are in operation tending to rescue men from extreme debasement: but what are the higher classes of Italians and Spaniards, who care neither for religion nor liberty! Adam Smith somewhere says, with great truth and boldness, "despotism is more destructive of the energies of the human mind than even anarchy itself." The perpetual tendency of our nature is to corrupt all things. Quiet we may not endure. It is therefore not inconsistent with the general dispensation of Providence, that our moral as well as our physical atmosphere should require to be purified by occasional storms.

OF ABSENTEEISM.

Absentem rodit.

Horace.

RECENT as the origin of political economy is, its uncertainty is almost proverbial. There seems to be no moral science in which it is so difficult to arrive at a conclusion universally true. The causes of this appear to be twofold. The first and principal is the difficulty, or rather the impossibility, of ascertaining facts in every instance precisely as they occur, of determining the separate importance of each fact individually, the aggregate importance of many facts collectively, the relative importance of each link of a long train of facts, and the relative importance of different trains: the second cause is the mode of treating political economy adopted by some writers, namely, of arriving at conclusions rather by reasoning *à priori*, than by patient and cautious induction from observation and experience. They are in too great a hurry to contradict received opinions.

There are many instances in the history of scientific discovery of antiquated opinions, scoffed at by successive generations of sneerers, yet demonstrated at last to be true ; it is not therefore absolutely impossible but that in some of the modern dogmas of political economy, time will prove us not so very much wiser than our ancestors as we suppose.

Few men have cultivated political economy with more diligence and success than Mr. M'Culloch. No one perhaps has done so much towards increasing our stock of statistical knowledge. Yet he is the principal supporter of one of the most startling paradoxes which the political economists have as yet ventured to broach.

Mr. M'Culloch contends that the injury supposed to be occasioned to the tradesmen, labourers, and industrious people of any given country, by the landlords spending their incomes abroad instead of on their own estates, is altogether imaginary. His general argument is briefly this.—Let Ireland be the country in question. An Irish agent wishes to transmit to an absentee landlord, resident in London, the rents he has received on his account. For this purpose he purchases a bill of exchange of a Dublin merchant, who, to enable him to draw upon London, must have previously sold to a London merchant a certain quantity of Irish produce. The actual rent therefore is not exported, but the produce only,

which enabled the Dublin merchant to draw upon London. The Dublin merchant thus stands in the landlord's place, and lays out the rent he received from the agent "in the purchase of Irish commodities, just as the landlord did when he was at home." * But what equivalent does Ireland receive for the Irish produce exported by the Dublin merchant? Suppose the landlord to have been resident; in that case the London merchant, instead of transmitting a bill of exchange, would have shipped goods for Ireland equal in value to the Irish produce exported by the Dublin merchant. The non-residence of the landlord therefore causes an excess of Irish exports over Irish imports, and a loss to Ireland of the difference; an excess which, as we shall see presently, is very considerable, and probably large enough to include the whole amount of the rents, forwarded in the manner Mr. M'Culloch supposes, to absentee landlords. In the particular case the London merchant liquidates his debt to the Dublin merchant for exported Irish produce, by paying the amount of the bill of exchange to the absentee landlord, which amount is exactly what Ireland loses by the transaction.

It appears from the tables of Irish imports and exports printed in the Appendix, No. 8. of Sir Henry

* Edinburgh Review, vol. xliii. p. 57.

Parnell's valuable work on Financial Reform, that the annual average amount of the Irish imports for the three years ending January 1826 was 7,491,890*l*.; the annual average amount of exports for the same period, 8,454,918*l*.; leaving a balance of the exports over the imports of 963,028*l*. As the record of the cross-channel trade was discontinued in January 1826, we have no means of ascertaining the amount of Irish imports and exports since that period. There does not appear to be any good ground for doubting these facts, nor does Mr. M'Culloch deny them, or the inference we draw from them, that this excess of exports over imports is caused by remittances to absentee landlords.

To a plain understanding these facts appear conclusive of the question. Mr. M'Culloch's mode of getting over the difficulty is curious. In his evidence before the Select Committee of the House of Commons on the state of the poor in Ireland, in June 1830, we find the following question put to him:

“ Can you say what is given in return to Ireland for that portion of the produce which goes to the expenditure of absentee proprietors resident in England ? ”

“ The return is that she gets the absentees kept in England ; she gets those persons kept here, who, if there were a stoppage of their remittances she

would be obliged to keep at home ; and she keeps them cheaper in England than she can keep them at home, a fact which is evinced by the circumstance of their coming over here." — *Minutes of Evidence*, p. 599.

Now this is really nothing more than an assertion, and a most startling assertion too. Surely Mr. M'Culloch will not contend that Ireland keeps the Duke of Devonshire cheaper at Chatsworth than she could keep him at Lismore Castle ; and yet this is a necessary inference from his position that Irish landlords are kept cheaper in England than at home. Do Irishmen come over to England to live cheap ? Mr. M'Culloch argues in a circle ; Irishmen come over to England because they are kept cheaper in England ; Irishmen are kept cheaper in England because they come over to England. It is necessary to prove that Irish landlords are kept cheaper in England than in Ireland by statistical facts, which Mr. M'Culloch has not done, and, we are satisfied, cannot do. England is generally supposed to be the dearest country in the world. The reasons why Irishman come over here are sufficiently obvious. They come over for pleasure, for profit, to enjoy themselves, to advance their fortunes ; for any or all of the reasons which induce men to leave a poor country for a rich one ; some too perhaps

for no better reason than that a man who goes to sleep in England has a fairer prospect of awaking alive than in the sister island.

Mr. M'Culloch seems to look upon rent as a sort of pill for landlords to swallow, not indeed remarkably unpleasant, but altogether disappearing with the act of deglutition, and that therefore it cannot signify on what spot of earth that act takes place. He admits that by sending abroad capital*, nations are impoverished and ruined, but denies that any such effect is produced by sending abroad revenue. It is in this unsound distinction that the main fallacy of the argnment lies.

Money may be spent, we are told, productively or unproductively. Money invested in trade or agriculture, and returning a per-centage to its employer over and above all expenses, we call capital, and the returns, profits or income, usually spent in necessities or luxuries, or in wages of servants who manufacture nothing that can be sold. Capital, it is said, is money employed productively; income, or at least that portion of it which is not added to the capital, is money employed unproductively. This distinction may suffice for common purposes, but it is not strictly accurate. It is a distinction not of kind, but only of degree. There

* Edinburgh Review, vol. xliii. p. 57.

is no antithesis in the case. Money spent in necessities is not absolutely spent unproductively, because without necessities we could not exist, and existence is a condition precedent to our receiving profits from capital. It is but a question of less and more.

When it is said that money may be spent unproductively, what is meant is that it may be so spent with reference to the capitalist. That a man may spend money in such a manner as to become poorer by spending it, or in other words treat his capital as if it were his income, is undeniable, but unless it can be shewn that he may so spend it as altogether to avoid giving a stimulus to production, Mr. M'Culloch's argument falls to the ground, and absenteeism is an evil. Money circulates rapidly through a great many hands in a short space of time. Supposing the first possessor to spend it unproductively in the strongest sense of the word, that is, to impoverish himself by spending it, or even to give it away, or lose it at the gaming-table, is it reasonable to infer that the second, third, fourth and fifth possessors will all do the same? Money cannot circulate through many hands without being employed, in some one instance at least, as capital, and the exportation of capital Mr. M'Culloch admits to be an evil. If the absentee landlord does not employ it as capital, his tradesman does. And

though of course that particular sum of money is employed most beneficially to society which is most frequently employed as capital ; and it may occasionally be some time before the exported rent of an absentee landlord is so employed, still it is but a question of time, the capital of some person it must become sooner or later, sometimes in a few weeks, sometimes in a few days, so that the importing country gains exactly what the exporting country loses, that is, the use of a determinate sum of money for an indeterminate length of time without an equivalent.

Suppose an Irish absentee landlord to be paid his rent, not through the medium of a bill of exchange, but by the actual produce of his own estate. As soon as he received this produce, as but a very small part could be consumed by himself, he would naturally sell it, and the proceeds of the sale would be his income. It matters nothing to Ireland (unless the price of specie happen for the moment to be higher there than in England, an extrinsic circumstance,) whether money or commodities are exported, the loss is the same either way, and the case Mr. M'Culloch puts equally impossible. He supposes an Irish landlord, resident in Dublin, to have there paid 300*l.* or 400*l.* a year to his coach and harness makers. Afterwards he supposes him to have removed to London, and there to have paid

the same sum for the same purpose. Yet he contends that Ireland loses nothing by the change, because the money paid in the first instance to the Dublin coach and harness makers "must now be paid to the producers of those articles that suit the English market," *Ed. Review*, vol. xliii. p. 66. How can this be? To take a simple case, let the absentee's tenants be linen-manufacturers, and send him their linen as rent. He pays them nothing in return. While he remained in Ireland, they had to sell their linen before his rent could be paid, and they do no more now. The quantity of linen sold is the same, or if increased, it must be owing to extrinsic circumstances. No stimulus can therefore possibly be given to Irish production generally by the non-residence of the landlords. If exports are increased, the home demand must be proportionally diminished, because the tradesmen and labourers, formerly employed by the landlords, have now less money to spend. The linen manufacturers cannot gain anything by the residence of their landlord in England, and the Dublin coach and harness makers lose his custom; but this last, says Mr. McCulloch, is no evil, for tradesmen "live by means of their own capital and industry, and these would support them though their customers were annihilated." *Ed. Review*, vol. xliii. p. 61. If this be so, the people who sent skates to Buenos

Ayres, and did not sell them there, could not have lost any thing by their freak. If any of them were ruined by it, they had the satisfaction of knowing it was quite contrary to all rules, for though they had no customers, their capital, the skates, remained. The theory is, that if a man has unfortunately invested his capital in an unprofitable trade, he sells off his stock and invests it in a trade which brings higher profits. But how can he sell off if there is nobody to buy? And when he has sold off, which in real life he is sure to do at a loss, if it should happen that a sufficient number of other tradesmen invest their capital in the more profitable trade at the same time, its profits immediately fall; then comes a glut of the article, which means that people will either not buy it at all, or only buy it at a very low price, and tradesmen learn from fatal experience whether they are dependent on their customers or no.

It is never safe to look upon men as insulated beings. We are affected in an endless variety of ways by the actions of our fellow-creatures. Thus competition of capital lowers profits, competition of labour lowers wages, competition of tenants raises rent: but if there were no customers there could be neither of the three, profits, wages or rent. Several elements go to make up profits, as capital,

labour and customers, profits could not exist without either, but it is not therefore at all necessary to take it for granted that one man can only gain by another's loss ; on the contrary, both parties may gain by the same transaction, as we shall presently endeavour to shew.

But we have not yet done with Mr. M'Culloch's doctrine of the uselessness of customers. Let us test it by the *reductio ad absurdum*, and see where it will carry us. Within the universal must be comprised the particular. If it matters not to Irish tradesmen whether Irish landlords spend their incomes at home or abroad, it cannot matter to particular tradesmen whether their customers continue to deal with them or employ others, provided they continue in some shape to spend the same sums. The bugbear of exclusive dealing, as unreal and unmeaning as any of his brother shadows of the nursery, is, like them, fit for nothing but to frighten children. Petitions for custom are on the part of tradesmen a labour of love ; bankruptcies, wilfulness. Money expended in any particular place cannot promote the prosperity of that place. Bath and Brighton would continue to flourish equally if deserted by all their visitors to-morrow. Extensive trade is of no importance to an individual, to a town, to a country, as long as the trade

of the whole world is extensive. If money is spent, so that it be not spent unproductively, it matters not where it is spent, nor to whom it is paid. Briefless barristers will henceforward doubtless take a more comfortable interest in the welfare of their seniors, since the guineas of Mr. Serjeant Wilde or Sir William Follett could not be of greater service to them even if they passed through their own fee-soliciting fingers. Again, if Irishmen are in no degree injured by the exportation of a part of the revenues of their landlords, neither would they be injured by the exportation of the whole of those revenues; if they are injured, though slightly, by the exportation of a part, they would be grievously injured by the exportation of the whole, and the extent of the evil of absenteeism will be in proportion to the amount of the Irish property of the absentees.

In ordinary cases there can be no very material difference between the value of the imports and exports of a country, because the imports must necessarily be purchased by the exports. But to this rule the rents of absentees create an exception, as they are exported without an equivalent; and they must raise the amount of exports above that of imports, because they are usually transmitted through the medium of bills of exchange. But this has nothing to do with the exploded mercantile

theory, which assumed the balance of trade* between two countries to be in favour of that country which exported a larger amount of goods than it imported, and consequently received the difference in specie. The real balance of trade is determined in a very different manner. Let a certain quantity of English cottons be purchased with a certain quantity of French wines. Let it be supposed that the English cottons and the French wines are of equal value in their respective countries. If the English cottons are sold in France by the French importer for a larger sum than the English importer can get for the French wines in England, the balance of trade is in favour of France, and conversely. But the trade between two countries must always be advantageous to both, as long as the net profit upon goods produced in one country and sold in the other is not inferior to the net profit upon the same goods if sold at home. If the net profit upon home produce sold abroad is inferior to the net profit upon the same produce sold at home, it is obvious that foreign trade must cease. All trade, therefore, between two countries must be advantageous to both, otherwise it would be discontinued; but the profits upon that trade in both countries are not necessarily equal. The balance of trade is

* Edinburgh Review, vol. xliii. p. 58.

determined in favour of either, by the excess of the value of its imports over the value of the imports of the other country : that is, by the difference between the prices obtained by the importing merchants for their respective imports in their respective countries. It is surely obvious that the question of absenteeism is quite distinct from this of the balance of trade.

There does not appear to be any other argument in favour of absenteeism which it is necessary to examine. The paradox has certainly not tended to advance the progress of political economy. As to the moral evils of absenteeism, Mr. M'Culloch seems to admit that the residence of a landlord on his own estate is generally beneficial to the character of the neighbourhood ; and so surely it must be, unless the landlord happen to be either more foolish or more wicked than men commonly are. There may possibly be a country where so many counter-acting circumstances are at work, that the residence of the landlord would produce evil rather than good, and that country may be Ireland. If it indeed be so, which is not however made out satisfactorily, such a state of things cannot too soon be changed. The relation of landlord and tenant has in it something patriarchal, and ought to be made the means of promoting good feeling on both sides.

The effects of absenteeism in diminishing the

wealth of a country cannot well be separated from its moral effects. The two different divisions under which the subject may be considered, unavoidably inroach upon each other. Thus absenteeism is a source of poverty, and from poverty result misery and crime; crime again causing alarm, by a natural reaction reproduces absenteeism.

But though absenteeism be in every point of view an evil, it would be folly and quackery to charge it with being the cause of all, or even of a very considerable portion of the peculiar evils of Ireland. These evils do not spring from one source, nor can they be removed by one remedy. If we must broach a nostrum of some kind, we would say, raise the Irish standard of comfort, an object which poor laws promise fairest to realise. They who blame the Irish for suffering themselves to be so easily made the tools of selfish and unprincipled agitators, should remember their unhappy circumstances, and consider, that though it is easy for people who look at the matter coolly from a distance, to see that the measures proposed by such men can in no degree tend to promote the ends nominally held out by them to their dupes, we might ourselves, in the place of the Irish peasants, be ready enough to grasp such shadows as they do. In Ireland we see not only religious and political dissensions, not only a minute subdivision of land, with a system of mid-

dlemen, interposing between the landlord and the cultivator of the soil, and goading the last into madness by exactions not in his power to satisfy, but a large proportion of the population filled with prejudices adverse to their own interests, reckless of human life, miserably clothed, miserably housed, and subsisting on the cheapest possible food in the smallest possible quantity. What can we expect from a state of things so monstrous ! But it is not new, it has existed heretofore in other countries, it has been in other instances in a great degree remedied ; and it may and will be remedied again by rulers who shall have the firmness and honesty to persevere in attacking what themselves know to be evils, and who will not be persuaded to think those evils, attested as such by the clamours alone of an ignorant and deluded populace.

OF THE MEN TO BE LOVED AND THE
MEN TO BE ADMIRED.

Süsses Dichten, laut're Wahrheit
Fesselt mich in Sympathie,
Rein verkörpert Liebes-Klarheit
Im Gewand der Poesie.

Goethe.

It is strange how little we know of each other. Men pass through life wearing a conventional mask, often partially, but seldom entirely withdrawn, save through the influence of those occasional emotions witnessed by few spectators, and which would cease to be powerful if they were less rare. Those with whom we are in the constant habit of social intercourse we know but imperfectly; many of our more distinguished contemporaries, with whose sayings and doings we are familiar without personal acquaintance, we often mistake most grossly; truly then may we say, in reverting to the worthies of antiquity,

“ Whose deeds have died, however nobly done,”*

* Spenser.

and left posterity no autographic memorial of those who wrought them ;

“ The world knows nothing of its greatest men.” *

If they who embark in the troubled seas of war and politics obtain more than their due admiration from contemporaries, the neglect of succeeding generations adjusts the scale. They have left nothing themselves by which we can judge them, we know them only at second-hand by what others have said of them, which usually amounts to no more than a skeleton of the real living man, to be fleshed by each inquirer after the fashion he lists. Our interest, therefore, in the characters of ancient warriors and statesmen, unless it should happen that their names are party-watchwords in our own times, is, like our knowledge of them, faint. We can see none but the literary dead in the light of personal acquaintances, and of these, only the comparatively few whose peculiar idiosyncrasy is stamped upon their works.

A man cannot express his opinions on many subjects without disclosing much of his moral character, for the will often bids the understanding find reasons for what it desires to think. Hence it is that we know men best by their books, which should be

* Philip van Artevelde.

their moral and intellectual epitome. But there are not many who have had the courage to tell the public neither more nor less, but just what they thought. It may be remarked by the way, that it is scarcely possible for a writer to be wholly uninteresting, who will think for himself and say what he thinks. This it is which will give his writings character, not to be attained by affectation or straining, and originality, which seems to be nothing more than the being true to oneself. This a feeble mind dares not be, and simple as the rule appears, it is not uniformly adhered to even by the strongest. We are too near to ourselves ever to look inwardly without some self-deception, and often neglect and violate what we believe we are most rigidly observing.

Authors, like men, are to be loved and admired, but the number of the admirable is greater than that of the amiable, and those who are capable of uniting both our admiration and affection are few. The number of these last, however, might have been considerably increased, had not some of the mightiest minds, as Homer and Shakspeare, studiously avoided self, and delighted to lose their own individuality in their subjects, leaving their readers, from the general tone of their works, to form conjectures of the author's character as they might.

Allusions to self in Homer are very rare. The

most pointed is that in the passage quoted from his Hymns by Thucydides, which refers, however, rather to his generic character as a poet, than to the individual man who bore the name of Homer. What Delian girl could have given other than an affirmative answer to the gentle request !

“ Ἐμέϊο δὲ καὶ μετόπισθε
μνήσασθ', ὅπποτε κέν τις ἐπιχθονίων ἀνθρώπων
ἐνθάδ' ἀνείρηται, ξείνος ταλαπείριος ἐλθὼν·
ὦ κοῦραι, τίς δ' ὕμνιν ἀνὴρ ἥδιστος ἀοιδῶν
ἐνθάδε πωλεῖται, καὶ τέφ' ἑρπεσθε μάλιστα ;
ὕμεῖς δ' εὖ μάλα πᾶσαι ὑποκρίνασθ' εὐφήμως,
τυφλὸς ἀνὴρ, οἰκεῖ δὲ Χίῳ ἐνὶ παιπαλοέσση.”

He appears also to have alluded to himself in that beautiful and touching description of the blind bard in the *Odyssey* :

“ τὸν πέρι Μοῦσ' ἐφίλησε, δίδου δ' ἀγαθόν τε, κακόν τε,
ὀφθαλμῶν μὲν ἄμερσε, δίδου δ' ἡδεῖαν ἀοιδήν.”

But the first Greek whom we know sufficiently to love as well as admire is Socrates. And him we know chiefly through the writings of that renowned disciple, who has exercised an influence over the philosophy of all succeeding generations, never to be obliterated while the world lasts. What must he have been who held such an empire over such a mind ? That Socrates, of whom Plato could say, “ To be reminded of him, whether I speak of him

myself, or hear him spoken of by others, is ever to me the most delightful of all things!"* It has rightly been esteemed a great thing "*laudari à laudato viro,*" but to be loved by a man than whom few or none were ever more worthy, both of affection and praise, infers the possession of every endowment, moral and intellectual, which can elevate and adorn humanity. The death of Socrates, in the act of conversing on the immortality of the soul with his disciples, is of all incidents in history the one wherein beauty and pathos seem most perfectly combined; with beauty always interesting, with pathos always subdued, it presents a picture of calm unostentatious fortitude, supported only by a doubtful glimmering of hope, which it is impossible to surpass. Plato's account of it cannot be read without recalling to mind the last discourses of the divine founder of our religion, under similar, though incomparably more painful circumstances.

If it be objected to Socrates and Plato that they founded no system, the answer is they loved truth too well. There is perhaps no passage in any writer where the love of truth is more transparent, than in that most touching and beautiful warning against submitting reason to authority in the last discourse of Socrates to his disciples: —

* *Phædon.*

“ You, however, if you will be persuaded by me, heeding Socrates little, but truth much more, if I should appear to you to say any thing true, receive it with me ; but if not, reject the whole argument ; and beware, lest, carried away by my ardour, I deceive both myself and you, and depart like the bee, leaving a sting behind me.”

When we remember who he was who thus spoke, what glorious humility is here !

It is remarkable that the distinguishing feature in the character of Socrates, as drawn by Plato, is the same as that of the romantic drama developed in the works of Shakspeare and Calderon, — breadth. Socrates appears, indeed, to have anticipated that union of tragedy and comedy* which for near two thousand years after his death no one dared to attempt, though without it the stage cannot be a correct imitation of the life of man. It is thus that minds of the highest order, however different their walks, unconsciously touch.

“ The language of Socrates,” says Plato in his Banquet, after having compared him to statues of Sileni and Satyrs, which were found when opened to contain images of the gods, “ would appear to a stranger at first altogether ridiculous. He would think his outward garb of words and phrases like

* See Plato’s Banquet.

the hide of a coarse Satyr. For he talks of asses with pack-saddles, and smiths, and shoemakers, and curriers, and he always seems to express the same meaning in the same words, so that every inexperienced and shallow man would laugh at his whole discourse. But whosoever should be admitted within and see it opened, would first perceive that the words of Socrates alone among men had an esoteric meaning, afterwards that they were most truly divine, containing within them the most beautiful representations of virtue, and also most comprehensive in grasp, and, indeed, including every subject which a man should examine, who would live in the beauty of goodness. These are the things, my friends, which in Socrates I admire." * — *Convivium*, 221, 222.

To complete this characteristic portrait, we must add that famous *εἰράνεια*, which is the spear of Ithuriel, whose touch no false system can endure.

Of Plato himself it is not too much to say, that, among literary men, those minds which are most amiable are most essentially Platonic. As an author, he is not to be excelled in grasp, variety, subtlety or eloquence, in the airy touch which

* I am indebted to the Bishop of London's article on Plato in the *Encyclo ædia Metropolitana*, for the striking passage I have here attempted to translate.

exhausts without an effort all the powers and graces of language ; as a man, pious, noble, pure, affectionate and gentle ; — hardly elsewhere shall we find united so much intellectual and moral beauty. It must, however, be confessed that the picture is not all light. Plato is, like most of his countrymen, too synthetical, his arguments are sometimes merely verbal, and Milton, a congenial mind, has blamed him for “fabling, and smooth conceits.” Such faults, however, do not make the author less delightful, or the man less amiable. All who are capable of understanding him must have felt that it was not idly said, “I would rather err with Plato than think justly with other men.”

Cicero, the most amiable, was also the best and wisest of all the Romans. He was, it may be, timid and vain, “ingenii sui nimium amator,” but he possessed that most precious of heavenly gifts, a beautiful mind. Notwithstanding some weaknesses, he was assuredly a man to be loved. Is there not affection as well as gratitude in the lines of Catullus ?

“Disertissime Romuli nepotum,
Quot sunt, quotque fuere, Marce Tulli,
Quotque post aliis erunt in annis !
Gratias tibi maximas Catullus
Agit, pessimus omnium poeta ;
Tanto pessimus omnium poeta
Quanto tu optimus omnium patronus.”

There is a fine feeling of courtesy in the charming dialogues of Plato and Cicero, which is not the least of their numerous excellences. Their tone is that of the most refined society of our own times: Spenser could say,

“Of court it seems men courtesy do call.”

We are apt to suppose it originated with those “gentle Norman men,” whom the noblest of our land are proud to claim as their ancestors; yet nowhere do we find it better understood than among these glorious republicans of Greece and Rome. Whenever one of the characters in these dialogues is introduced as rallying another, it is always “*comiter ut solebat*.” What has earth so delightful, as it must have been to linger in “the olive grove of Academe,” in the sweet society of Socrates, Plato, and Critias; or on some terrace overlooking the blue Tuscan sea, beneath the leafy shade of a trellised vine, to discuss philosophical questions the livelong day with Balbus, Cotta and Cicero!

Cicero had most exalted notions of friendship. If others have understood equally with him what friendship is, none perhaps have expressed it so well.

“*Amare autem nihil aliud est nisi eum ipsum diligere quem ames, nullâ indigentia, nullâ utilitate quæsitâ.* *Caritate benevo-*

lentiâque sublatâ omnis est è vitâ sublata jucunditas.

Equidem, ex omnibus rebus," says Lælius, "quas mihi aut fortuna aut natura tribuit, nihil habeo quod cum amicitîâ Scipionis possim comparare. In hâc mihi de republicâ consensus, in hâc rerum privatarum consilium; in eâdem requies plena oblectationis fuit: nunquam illum ne minimâ quidem re offendi quod quidem senserim, nihil audiavi ex eo ipse quod nollem. Una domus erat, idem victus, isque communis: neque solûm militia, sed etiam peregrinationes rusticationesque communes."

If such friendship ever did exist as that which Cicero has here ascribed to Scipio and Lælius, most certainly it does not exist now. Even if such friends, by some extraordinary chance, were anywhere to be found, they would soon be sneered out of their better feelings in these days. And yet, is there a man who has any thing noble in his nature who has not desired or felt the want of such pure and perfect sympathy!

Montaigne, that charming thinker aloud, who, though occasionally objectionable in a moral point of view, has yet thrown so much soul into his Essays, goes beyond Cicero; "les discours mesmes que l'antiquité nous a laissé sur ce subject me semblent lasches au prix du sentiment que j'en ay." He professes, too, to speak from experience, thus beautifully

indulging his philosophical egotism : “ Car, à la vérité, si je compare tout le reste de ma vie, quoyqu’ avecques la grace de Dieu je l’aye passée douce, aysée, et, sauf la perte d’un tel amy, exempte d’affliction poissante, pleine de tranquillité d’esprit, ayant prins en payement mes commodités naturelles et originelles, sans en rechercher d’autres ; si je la compare, dis-je, toute, aux quatre années qu’il m’a esté donné de jouyr de la compaignie et société de ce personnage, ce n’est que fumée, ce n’est qu’une nuict obscure et ennuyeuse.”

The climax, however, was reserved for Sir Thomas Browne : —

“ I hope I do not break the fifth commandment, if I conceive I may love my friend before the nearest of my blood, even those to whom I owe the principles of life. I never yet cast a true affection on a woman ; but I have loved my friend, as I do virtue, my soul, my God.”

It is somewhat doubtful, nevertheless, whether the delicious knight ever had such a friend ; but while the idea only existed in his own most vivid imagination, it sufficed with him for every necessary purpose. There is assuredly no better test of a noble and beautiful mind than an exalted notion of friendship. Lord Bacon, though too wise to break into such raptures on the subject as Cicero, Montaigne, and Browne, evidently had the same feel-

ings. How touchingly does he say! "A crowd is not company, and faces are but a gallery of pictures, and talk but a tinkling cymbal where there is no love." We can hardly believe that he is not speaking here of our own times. The real, though uncomfortable truth on this subject is given in the saying of the wise and inspired king, one of the last certainly which we should have expected to hear from a royal mouth; "Keep thy foot from thy neighbour's house, lest he be weary of thee, and so hate thee." Is not this the germ of some of our modern maxims, as, "Pique a man and he will court you, court him and he will slight you," whose partial truth no one can mix much in the world without discovering. Ben Jonson is unjust in attacking only the gentler sex,—

" Follow a shadow, it still flies you,
 Seem to fly it, it will pursue :
 So court a mistress, she denies you,
 Let her alone, she will court you."

All artifices are contemptible, but nothing shews more clearly than the constant success of artifices "*pour se faire valoir*," the intrinsic littleness of humanity. Men cannot admire excellence in itself alone; there must always be something extrinsic, something "*ad captandum*." Shall we not then exclaim, in bitterness of soul, with him whom Byron

rightly called "Rome's least mortal mind," "*O præclarum diem, cùm ad illud divinum animorum concilium cætumque proficiscar, cùmque ex hâc turbâ et colluvione discedam!*" Or with Browne, when, improving on the words of Cicero, that the world is an inn, and not a dwelling-place, he says, "For the world, I count it not an inn but a hospital, and a place not to live but die in!"

Admirable as are the courage and candour of Montaigne and Browne, and of others who preceded and followed them in the same track, and valuable as their very curious contributions to intellectual anatomy are, incidental and subordinate self-painting is the most accurate and the best. An elaborate full-length portrait is not always the most characteristic. How is it then, it may be asked, if incidental self-painting be thus instructive, that we know so little of Shakspeare, who did not live, like Homer, in a barbarous age before the dawn of history, but scarcely more than two centuries since, and who has allowed himself in his works a wider range, wherein it was obviously more difficult to hide his idiosyncrasy, than any man before him ever dared to attempt? But it is this very vastness which makes Shakspeare so mysterious. Goethe has somewhere a chapter on this subject, entitled "Shakspeare and no end," and justly, for his works are the most complete symbol of the infinite

we possess. He has identified himself with none of his characters. We cannot discover that he sympathises more strongly with Hamlet or Jaques than with Falstaff or Mercutio. There have been men whose souls were "like stars, and dwelt apart," but it was often in ignorance; Shakspeare dwelt apart in the fulness of knowledge and wisdom. It is, therefore, impossible to comprehend him thoroughly; but, notwithstanding some passages, which were probably interpolated, or which appeared to his age in a light very different from what they do to ours, thus much we may certainly affirm, that his mind could not have been other than gentle, noble, and pure. His gentleness is shewn by his constant though chaste appeals to all the better feelings of human nature, his nobility by the justness and fine moral perception of his sentiments, his purity by his exquisite and unequalled delineations of women. What freedom, too, from selfishness in the beautiful sonnet on his own death, in the very point where selfishness is most venial, the desire to be lamented when we die! Of Shakspeare's moral man, then, we may know something, but the intellectual is beyond our grasp, and, indeed, no theme for criticism, which may find perpetual employment in searching for the hidden treasures of that mighty deep. As Cicero said of the productions of physical nature,

his excellences are in multitude incredible, in variety insatiable.

Among our older prose writers there is not one more worthy to be loved than Hooker. He has not, indeed, with Shakspeare thrown a broad light over all the feelings and actions of men, or with Bacon over all their knowledge; but his imagination is scarcely less poetical than Bacon's, his reason almost equally exact and searching, his periods not less stately or less sonorous; and nowhere, perhaps, shall we find united in the same individual, in the same degree, such profound wisdom, such fervent piety, such exalted goodness.

If any farther illustration of the constituent qualities of a fine mind be necessary, perhaps no better can be given than Locke's epitaph, written by himself:—

“*Hic juxta situs est Johannes Locke. Si qualis fuerit rogas, mediocritate suâ contentum se vixisse respondet. Literis innutritus, eòusque profecit ut veritati unicè litaret. Hoc ex scriptis illius disce; quæ, quod de eo reliquum est, majori fide tibi exhibebunt quam epitaphii suspecta elogia. Virtutes si quas habuit, minores sanè, quàm sibi laudi, tibi in exemplum proponerentur. Vitia unà sepe liantur. Morum exemplum si quæras, in Evangelio habes; vitiorum utinam nusquam: mortalitatis certè quod prosit hìc et ubique.*”

Of the famous literary triumvirate of the last century, Pope, Swift, and Bolingbroke, the peevish poet is surely to be preferred to the hard-hearted misanthrope, or the unprincipled voluptuary ; though St. John was one rich in all natural gifts —

“ Mercurio ingenio, Jupiter ventura,
Marte valor, y Venus hermosura.”*

Hazlitt has remarked, in his Essay “ On the Men one would like to have seen,” the peculiar elegance of Pope’s compliments. They shew extreme tact and delicacy of mind, but the subjects of some of them occasionally remind us of his own comparison of straws preserved in amber. Pope had a feeling heart, as even Swift testifies —

“ Poor Pope will grieve a month, and Gay
A week, and Arbuthnot a day.”

Among our own contemporaries, the author of the Doctor and Charles Lamb are the most Platonic in disposition, which, as the former remarks, is the one thing unchangeable through life. Lamb, quaint and affected as he is, has an exquisite sense of the beautiful, the humorous, and the pathetick. He is remarkable for deep and striking thoughts, which he pours forth in all their natural rawness, though

* Calderon.

there is truth and novelty enough in them to make the fortunes of many a cooker up of systems. Lamb, like Montaigne, is a most interesting study for the psychologist; he does not, with many writers of more pretension, but less depth and courage, give merely the results of long trains of thought, but he shews us his mind in the very act of thinking, he gives us his half-formed opinions; he is content to be ignorant of many things,—an excellent symptom of intellectual health; and if he can but occasionally catch a glimpse for a moment of the face of truth, darkly shadowed out in the ancient mystery of the veiled goddess of Sais, he asks for no more; he has fulfilled his destiny.

It is not a bad test of a man's intellectual character to ask him, when he has an opportunity of giving a full and satisfactory answer, what he thinks of the Doctor? That answer, if he can give it, will decide whether he is a Platonist or an Aristotelian, under one of which heads, says Coleridge, all thinkers may be classed. The beautiful is the author's forte; in the odd and the curious, of which there is certainly too much, he is less successful. The boldness and originality of the design are worthy of all praise; the execution on the whole would seem to require more vigour and less oddity. A man can take up few books, however, from which he is so likely to rise the better for reading. It

instils nothing with more earnestness than piety and the cultivation of the domestic affections, at all times and in all countries the true sources of happiness. Both these, it is obvious, must come from within, and without them what are the wonder-working institutions of the credulous scoffers, who practically believe in nothing save the fantastic creations of their own self-love! Froth, foam, or whatever is most unsubstantial. There are some angry spots visible on the outer rind of the Doctor, but all, we are persuaded, is calm and sound at the core.

But enough of illustrations. Goethe has embodied in the pregnant motto prefixed to these remarks the chief qualities which make an author loved; a poetical imagination, candour, and warm feelings. Delightful as the possession of these gifts must enable a man to render a book, it is doubtful whether they contribute much to his own happiness, or peculiarly fit him for the worldly conflicts he will have to endure. Certain it is that there are few, if any noble-minded men who have not given vent to feelings of bitter disappointment, when they discovered the contrast between the ideal and the real world. The energy of the expression may vary according to the character of the utterer, but whether the language be that of the contemplative north or of the impetuous south, the sentiment is

still the same. What is calm philosophic despair in Goethe,

“ Bilde mir nicht ein was Rechts zu wissen,
 Bilde mir nicht ein ich könnte was lehren
 Die Menschen zu bessern und zu bekehren.”*

And Schiller,

“ In des Herzens heilig stille Räume
 Muss du fliehen aus des Lebens Drang,
 Freiheit lebt nur in dem Reich der Träume,
 Und das Schöne blüht nur im Gesang.”*

becomes heart-rending anguish in the mouth of the ardent and unhappy Tasso,

“ Che piu si spera, o che s’attende omai !
 Dopo trionfo e palma,
 Sol qui restano al’ alma
 Lutti e lamenti, e lagrimosi lai.
 Che piu giova amicizia o giova amore !
 Ahi lagrime ! ahi dolore !”

If misfortunes should be supposed to have overwhelmed the mind of Tasso, let us turn to Petrarch, the laurelled pet of princes and nations, the restorer

* This stanza runs naturally into English verse :

To the deep heart’s silent, holy cell,
 Must thou fly from out life’s busy throng,
 Freedom in the realm of dreams must dwell,
 And the beautiful but blooms in song.

of literature, the creator of a language ; — who can hope to run a more brilliant and glorious career ? Yet what conclusion does he draw from it all ? The best of things is death :

“ Irrequietus homo per multos anxius annos
Ad mortem festinat iter ; mors optima rerum ! ”

Many indeed may be disappointed and weary of the world, but it is the christian alone who can truly say at the last mysterious hour, when his “ feet stumble upon the dark mountains,”

“ ἀσπασίη, τρίλλιστος, ἐπήλυθε νύξ ἐρθεεννή.” *

* Homer.

THE END.

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